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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

ADVOCACY AS A COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT TECHNIQUE

IN WORKING WITH LOW-INCOME FAMILIES

by



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A THESIS

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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

The undersigned certify that they have read, and
recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for acceptance,
a thesis entitled "Advocacy as a Community Development
Technique in Working with Low-Income Families," submitted
by Dariel Sparling Bateman in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

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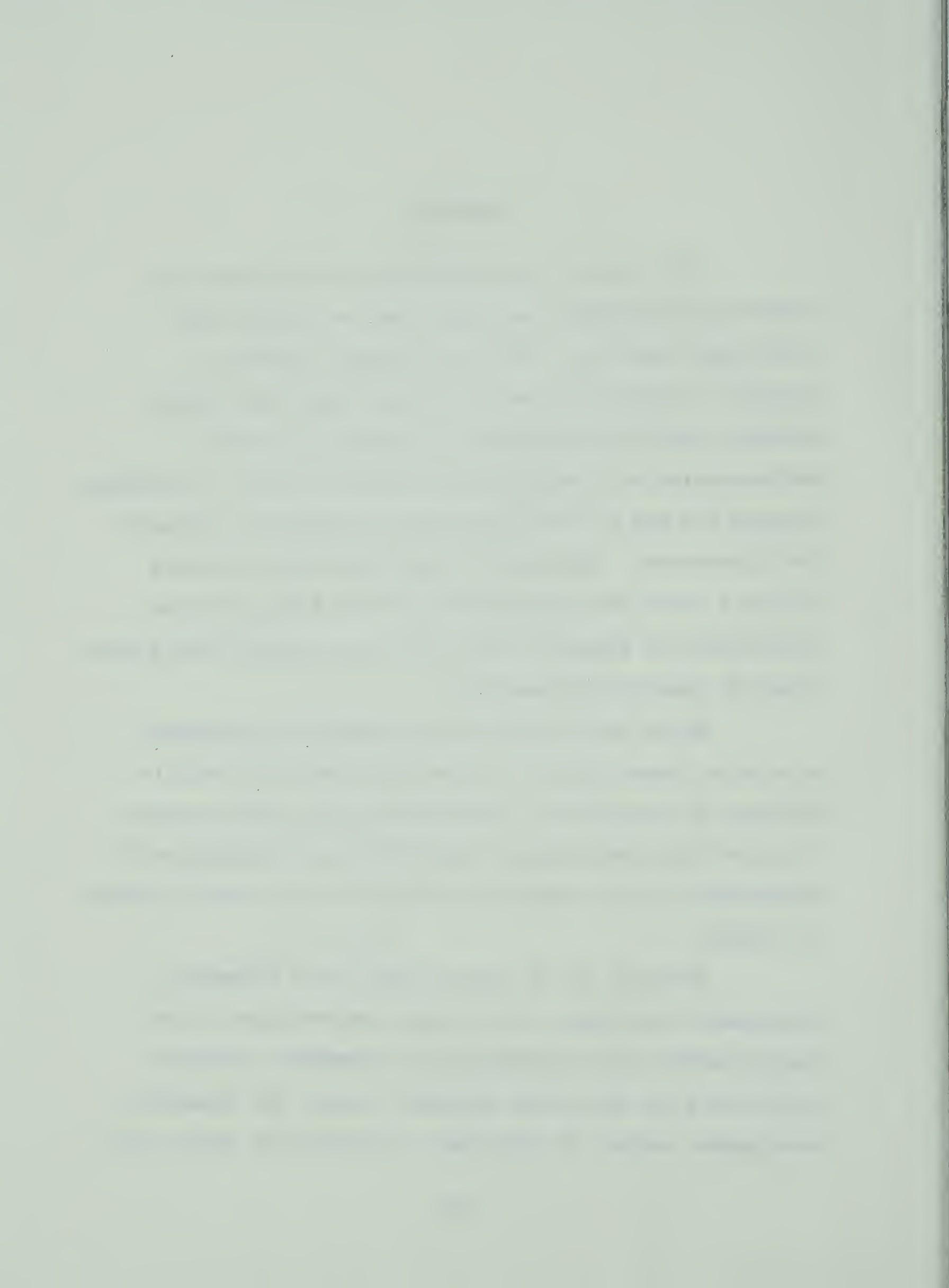


ABSTRACT

This thesis is an examination of advocacy as a community development technique used in working with low-income families. The two principal thrusts of advocacy, intervention at the crisis level into family affairs, and the involvement of families in social policy-making at a personal and societal level, are examined through the use of case histories and through a review of the literature. The data for the study were collected during a field work experience with the Family Service Association of Edmonton where the writer worked with a core group of twenty-five families.

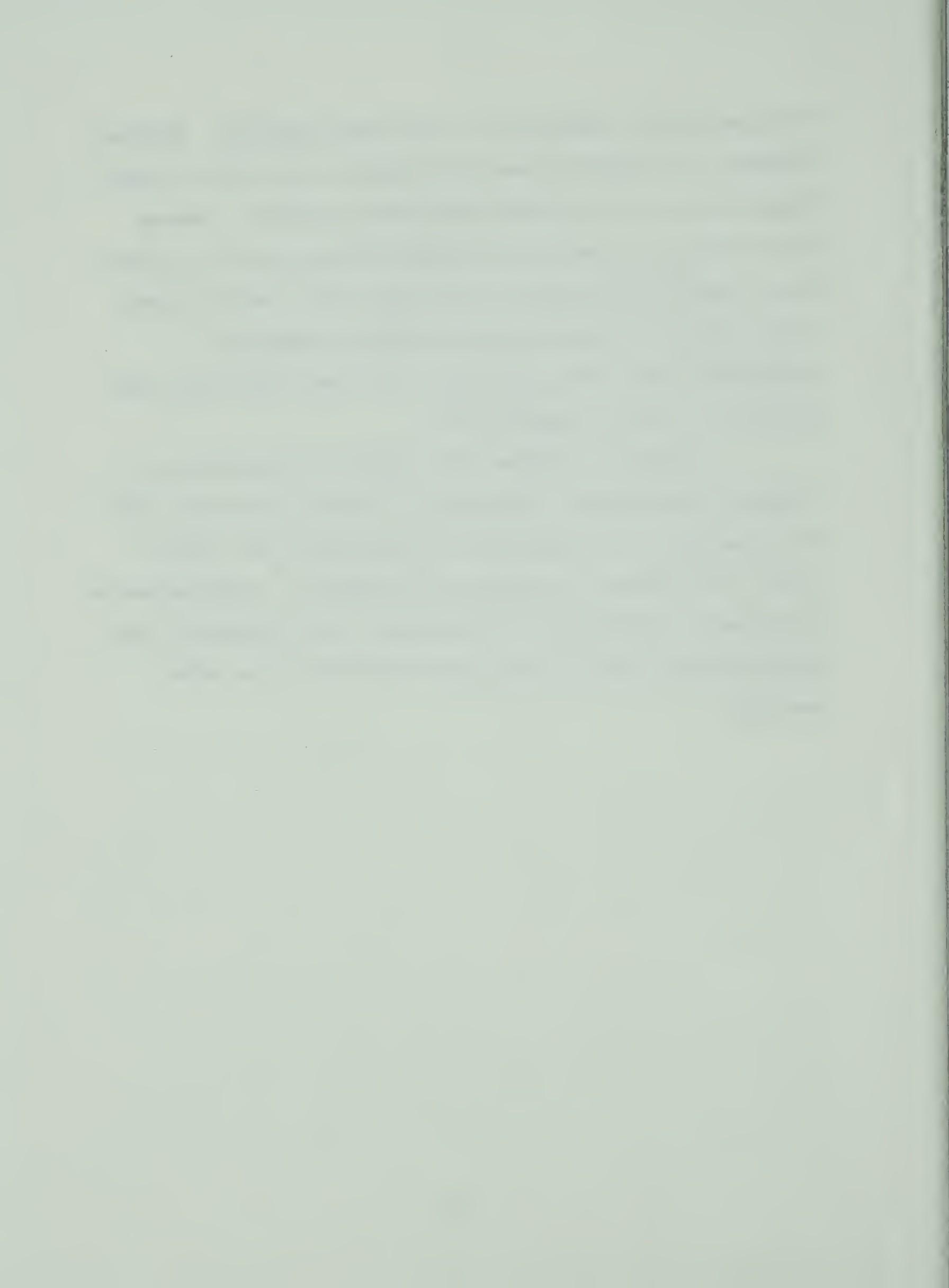
While urban poverty is a measurable phenomena, it is also an experiential one that has associated with it feelings of alienation, futurelessness and powerlessness. It is to this powerlessness that advocacy, developed as an alternative to the traditional forms of social work, attempts to respond.

Advocacy can be used as well, as a community development technique. The crisis interventions at the family level, while alleviating the immediate distress experienced by low-income families, assist the community development worker (or advocate) in gaining an entree into



this particular community of low-income families. Working together, the advocate and the families can attempt social change both at the personal and societal level, thereby alleviating the feelings of powerlessness held by the poor. Thus commonalities exist at the goal level, at the client level and at the process level between community development and family advocacy. The case histories used demonstrate these commonalities.

Findings indicate that advocacy works well as a community development technique in gaining an entree into the community. The process of intervention can lead to client involvement in social policy-making. Simultaneously, the process alleviates to some extent, the alienation and powerlessness felt by low-income families in an urban setting.



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This thesis is dedicated first to my parents whose ongoing concern for the human condition led me into this field, and to whom I owe a great debt; and secondly, to my husband Stephen, whose patient encouragement during the writing of this thesis was so very much appreciated.

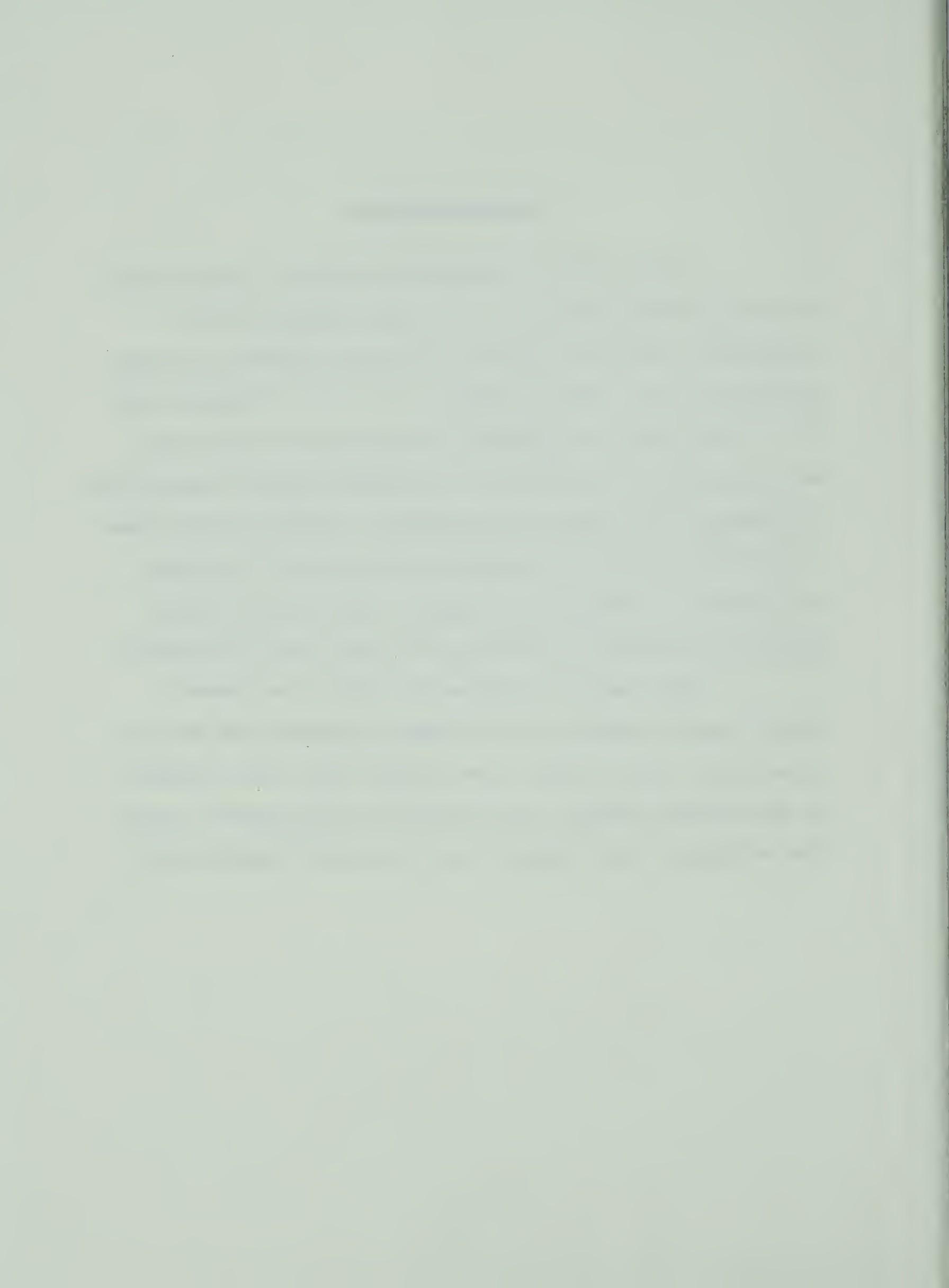
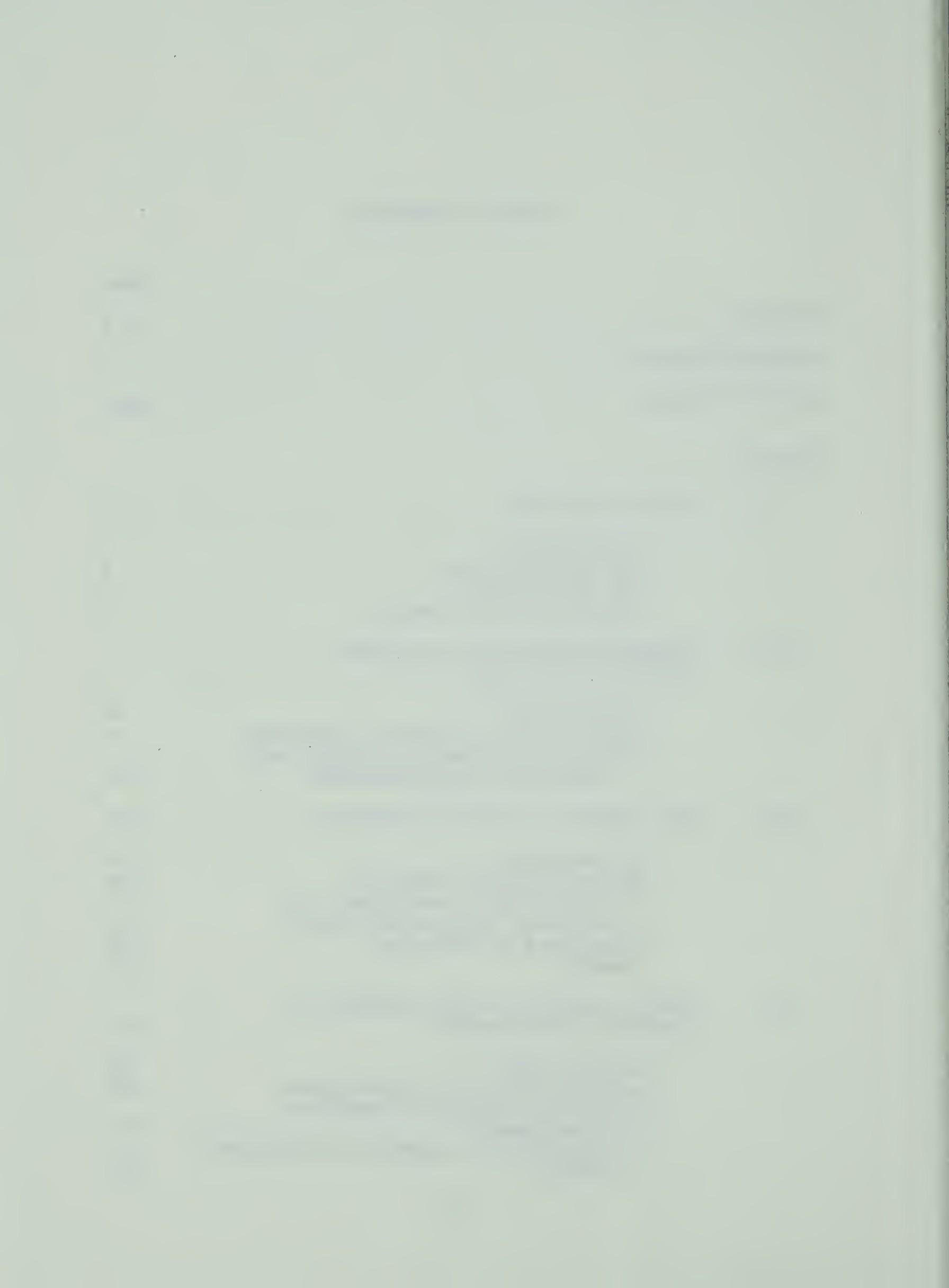
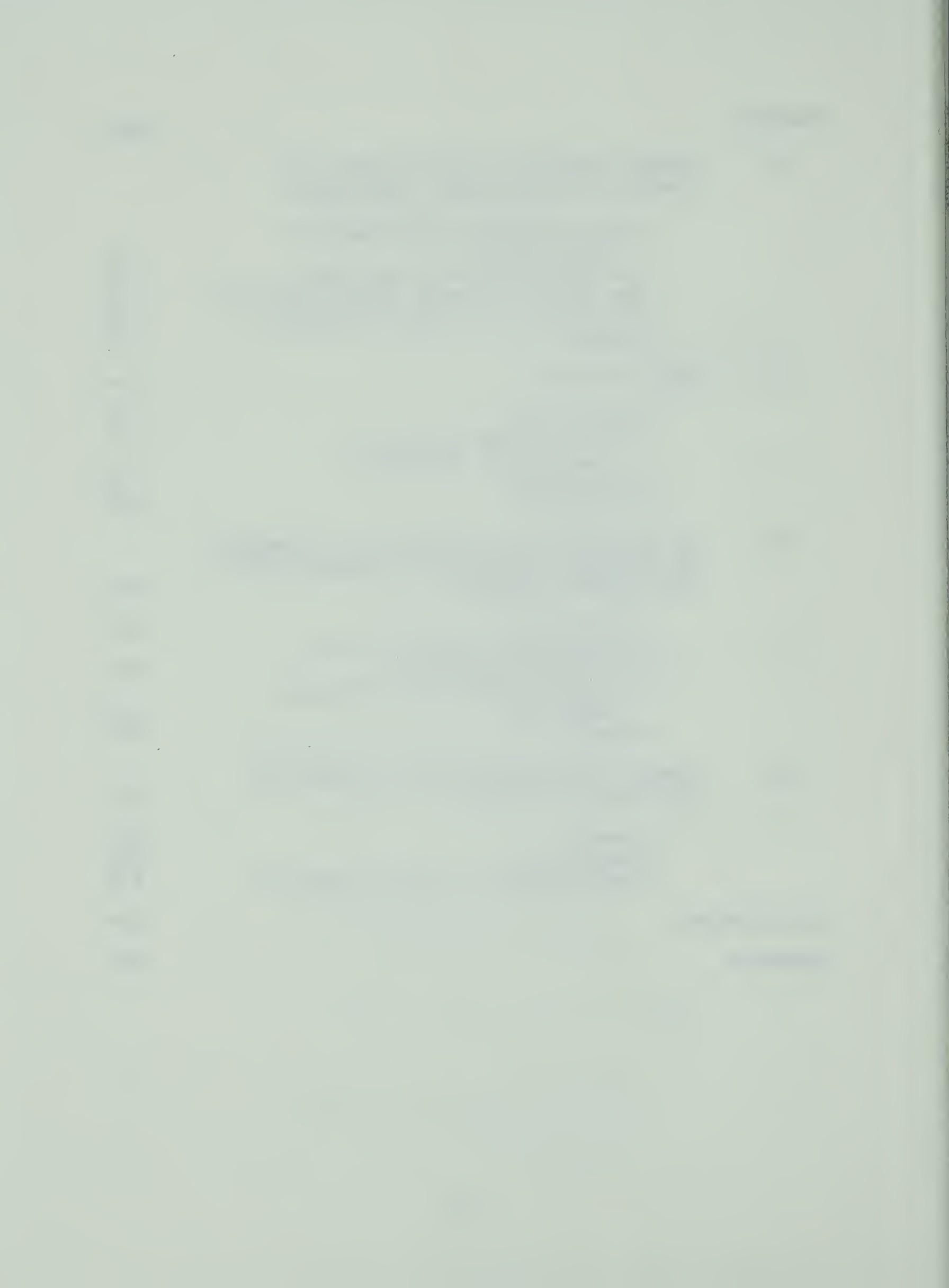


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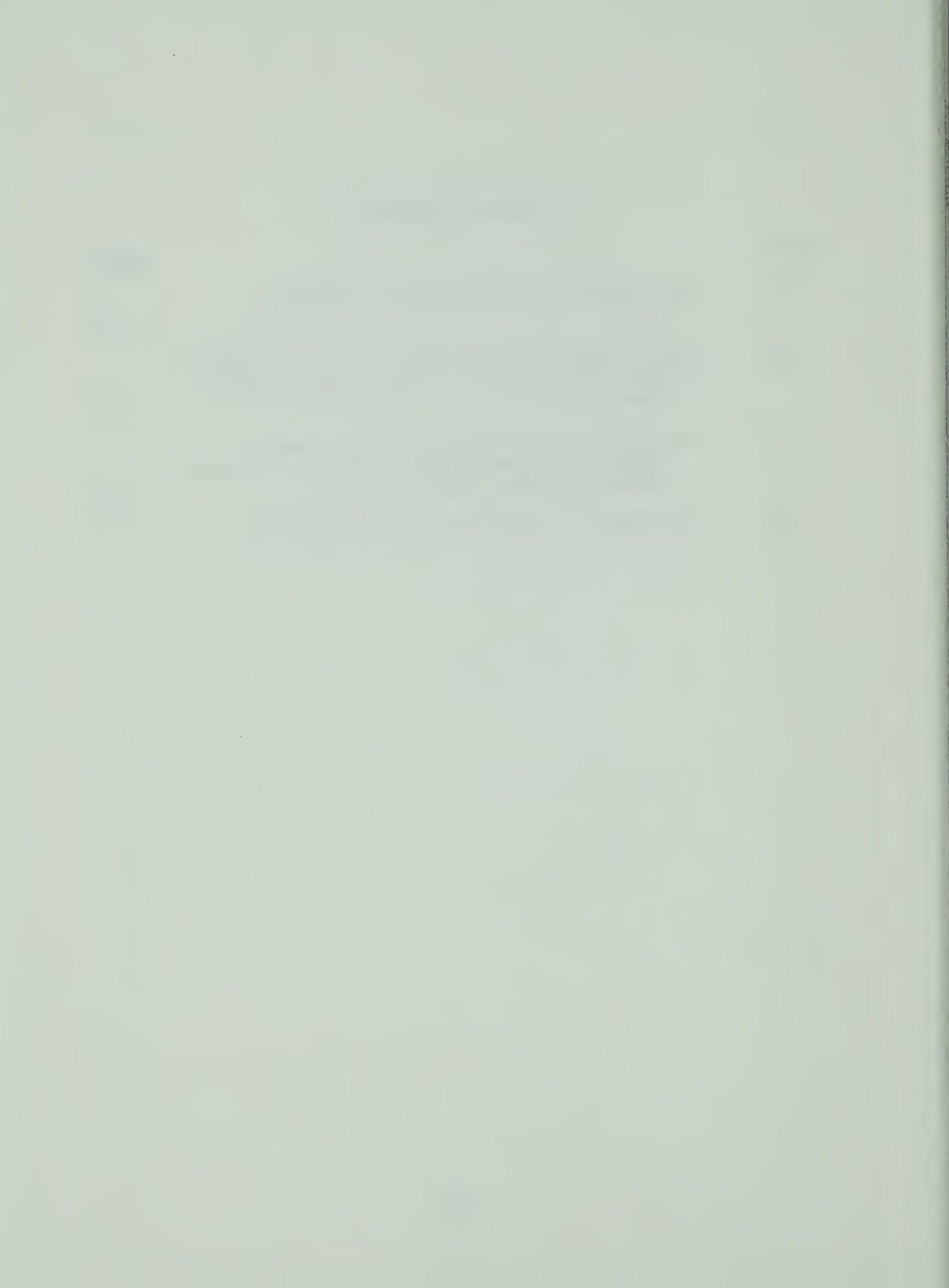


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CHAPTER I

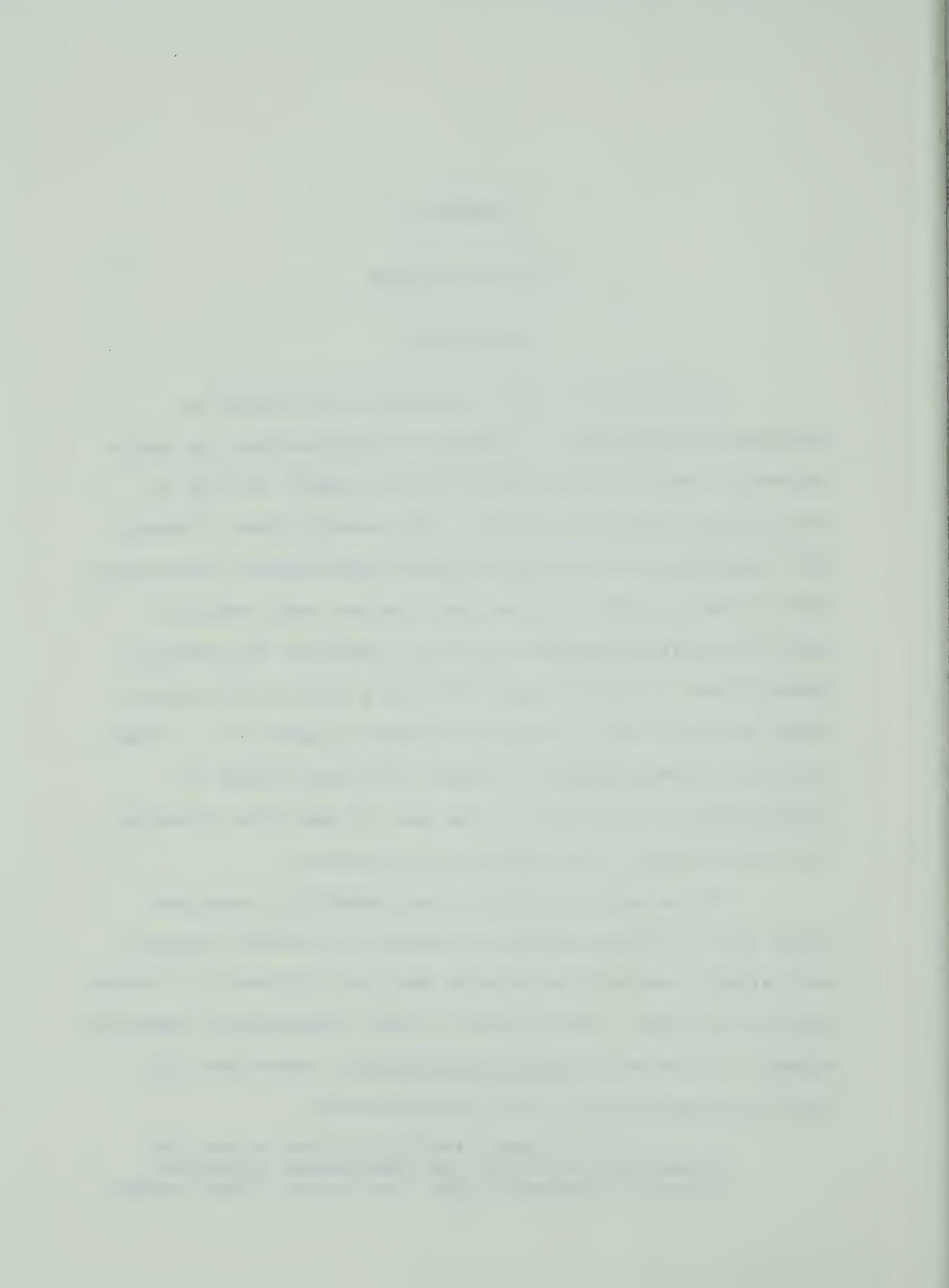
THESIS OVERVIEW

Introduction

Much of the current work being published in sociological journals, in popular literature and the media concerns itself with alienation as an aspect of life in this century and this decade. The research that is being done suggests that many individuals and families are moving, and are being moved, further and further away from the decision-making processes of their immediate and external communities: they are less and less a part of the social order and are losing interest in being a part of it. Their resultant powerlessness to affect the social order is accompanied by a feeling on the part of many that changing the social order is an exercise in futility.

Those helping agencies and community resources which are organized precisely to deal with these feelings are largely ineffective because they are difficult to locate, and once located, often prove to offer insufficient services. Nisbet, in his book Community and Power, summarizes this state of powerlessness and alienation well:

. . . it has become steadily clearer to me that alienation is one of the determining realities of the contemporary age: not merely a key concept

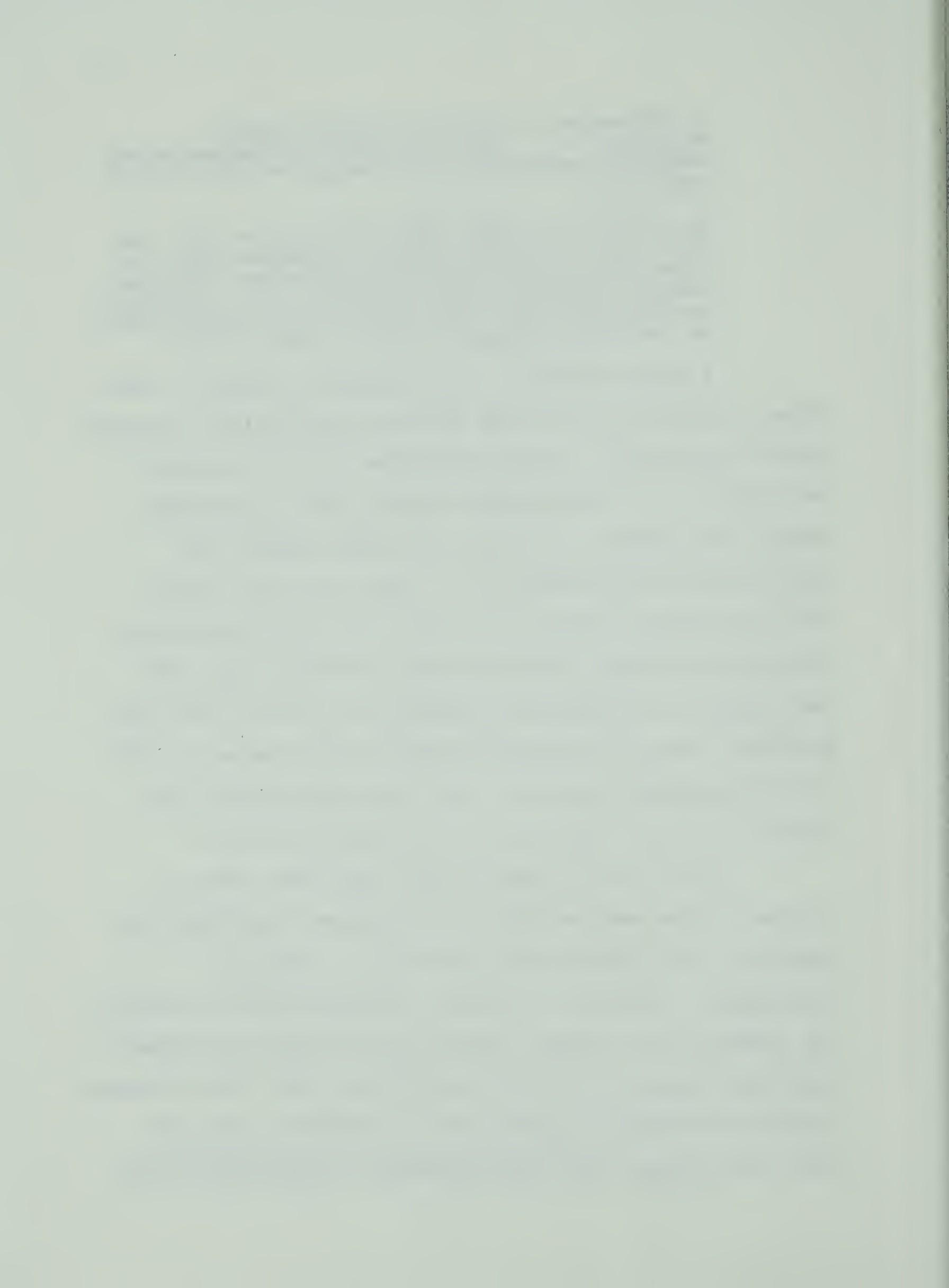


in philosophy, literature and the social sciences . . . , but a cultural and psychological condition implicating ever larger sections of the population.

By alienation I mean that state of mind that can find a social order remote, incomprehensible, or fraudulent; beyond real hope or desire; inviting apathy, boredom or even hostility. The individual not only does not feel a part of the social order; he has lost interest in being a part of it.¹

A prime example of the category of people to whom Nisbet refers are low-income families and families receiving social assistance. A high percentage of these families are seen as: (1) uninformed regarding their legislated rights, (2) unable, for reasons of mental health and associated low self-concepts, to fight for these rights, (3) are tied to a style of life out of which they perceive no chance of escape. They are seen as lacking even the bare physical and emotional equipment for coping with their problems. While professional social workers refer to them as "multi-problem families," the families perceive themselves to be in a hopeless and futureless situation.

Historically, many attempts have been made to respond to the powerlessness of low-income individuals and families. One response has been that of community development. Through a process of education and motivation, the community development worker has encouraged individuals who share concerns to jointly seek action upon those concerns. Programs utilizing a broad number of community resources have been devised (by these groupings of individuals) that



attempt to alleviate and act on the shared concerns.

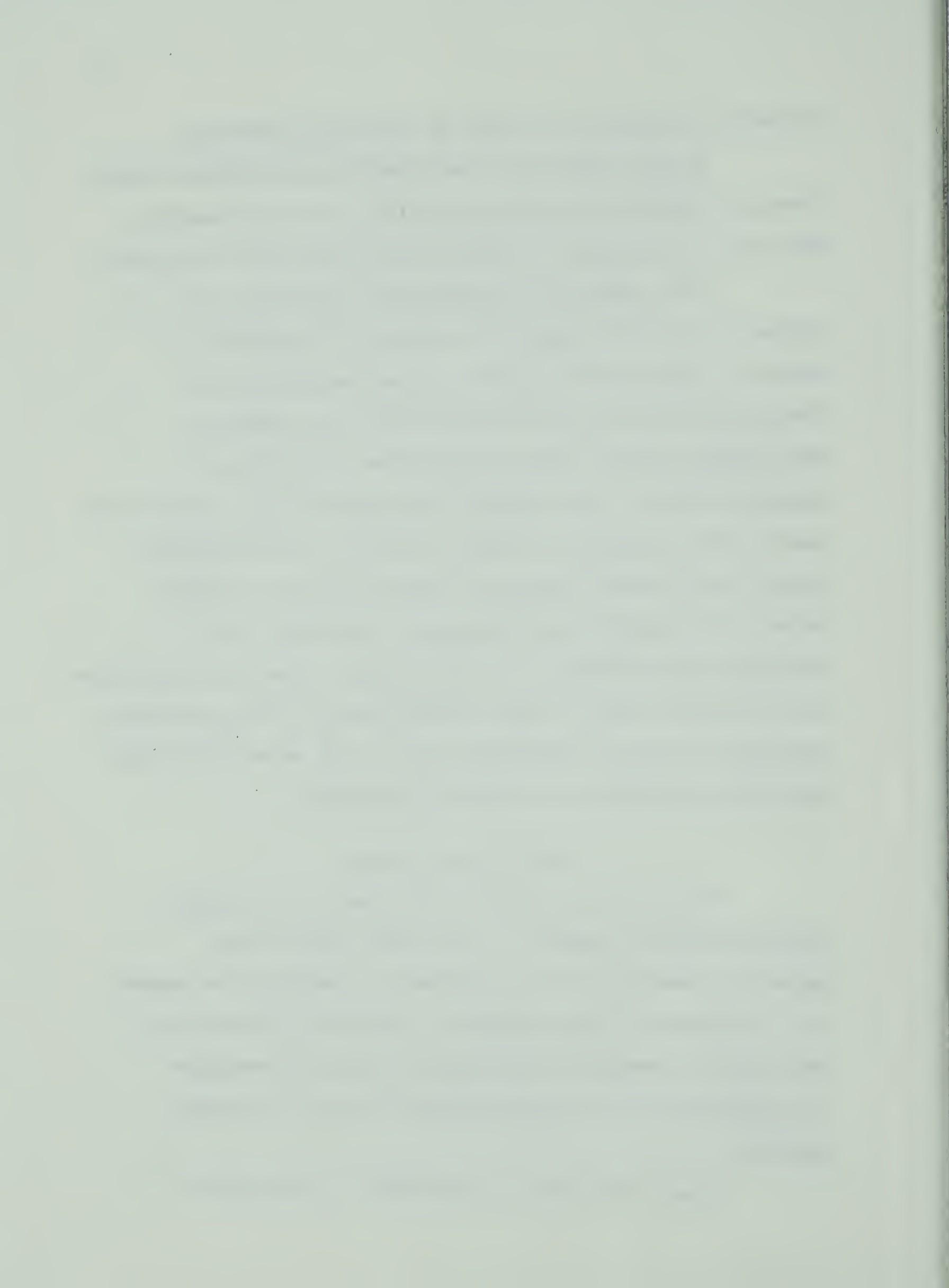
In any community, the community development worker faces an immediate problem of entree into the community. How does one approach a community and gain its confidence?

The community of low-income families is no different in this respect in offering the problems of entree. Low-income families, as was suggested, are frequently multi-problem families and the community development worker faces the problems of entree as suggested above. One possible solution to this lies in the use of the technique of family advocacy, or third-party crisis intervention where the worker acts as a bridge between the families and community resources. This technique was designed to offer firstly, immediate assistance at the crisis level to low-income families, with follow-up designed to assist these families to cope more effectively with their personal and community problems.

The Central Focus

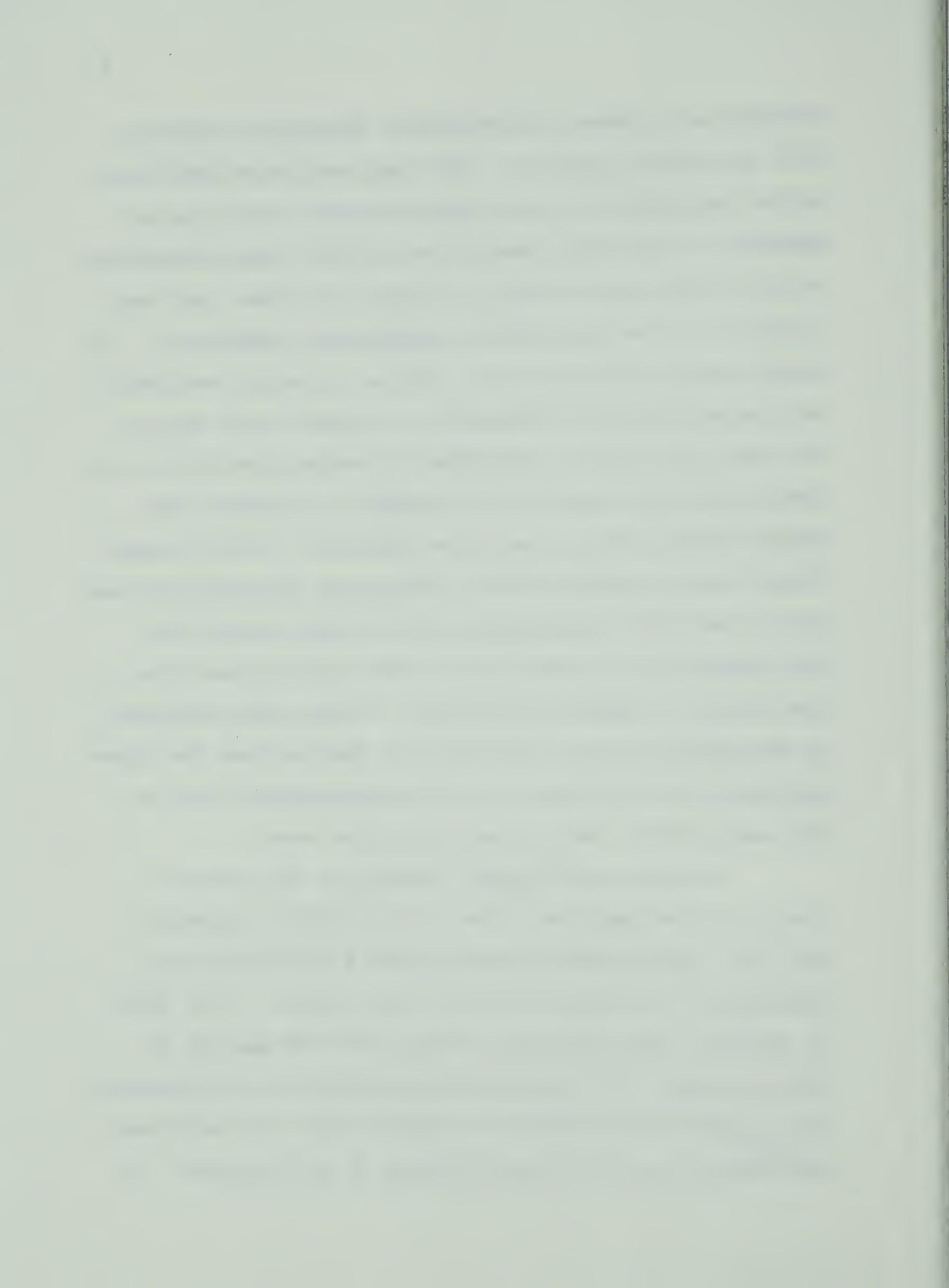
The central focus of this thesis is on these three principal elements: low-income families who perceive themselves to be powerless, community development as a response to these families, and family advocacy as the specific community development technique employed in responding to the powerlessness felt by low-income families.

Thus, the topic of the thesis is "The Use of



Advocacy as a Community Development Technique in Working with Low-Income Families." The topic was chosen while the writer was employed by the Family Service Association of Edmonton to work with twenty-five families whose predominant characteristic was the fact of their low income, and their inability to function without professional assistance. The Family Service Association of America, of which the Family Service Association of Edmonton is a member, has, during the past three years, encouraged its member agencies to use family advocacy thrusts in an attempt to alleviate the powerlessness felt by low-income families. It is a unique thrust for the Family Service Association of America because their traditional approach has always been casework and the counselling of individuals rather than the use of a wide range of community resources. It was also stipulated by the Family Service Association of America that the client group was to be involved in social policy-making both at the agency level, and at the legislative level.

The topic was chosen, because in the writer's view, it is an important issue in our society, given the fact that approximately twenty percent² of the Canadian population is considered to be of low income. It is also an important topic because it deals with the quality of life in Canada, the equitable distribution of all resources, the equitable distribution of opportunities for individuals and families to be full participants in this society. It



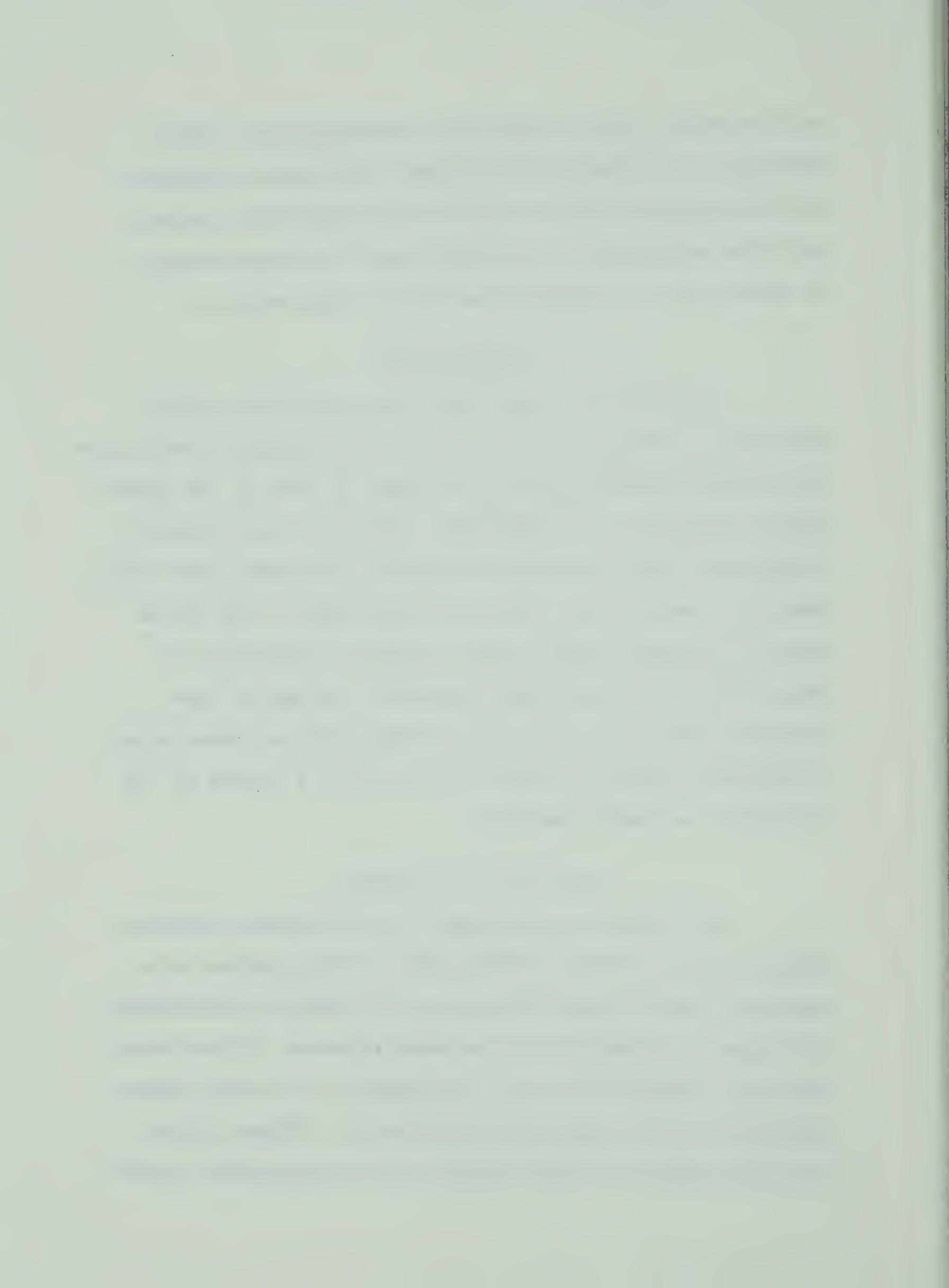
is also hoped that by offering a description of family advocacy as a community development technique in working with low-income families, that other people will perhaps use this technique to the extent that it is efficacious in working with alienated families in this country.

The Methodology

The data for this thesis come from the author's experience in working with a core client group of twenty-five low-income families during the summer of 1970 at the Family Service Association of Edmonton. Material was collected through the use of loosely structured interviews with these families, the use of a detailed diary kept by the writer during the summer months which contains reflections on the situation of low-income families, the use of case histories from the files of the Family Service Association of Edmonton Advocacy Project, and finally a review of the literature on family advocacy.

The Plan of the Thesis

The thesis is organized in the following fashion: Chapter One is a brief introduction to the problem to be examined, namely family advocacy as a community development technique in responding to the powerlessness of low-income families. Chapter Two is a description of the low income population objectively and subjectively. Chapter Three describes family advocacy showing its two principal thrusts



of third-party crisis intervention and social policy-making. Chapter Four relates family advocacy to community development, considering advocacy as a possible technique early in the community development process. Chapter Five uses case histories to illustrate the process of family advocacy. Chapter Six is a critical evaluation both of the theory of family advocacy and of the practice of it during the summer of 1970 at the Family Service Association of Edmonton. An evaluation of the agency itself, is not attempted. Chapter Seven includes a summary of findings, and their implications for future work by practitioners and researchers.

FOOTNOTES

¹R. A. Nisbet, Community and Power (New York: Oxford University Press, 1953), p. viii.

²Economic Council of Canada Fifth Annual Review, The Challenge of Growth and Change (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1968), p. 108.

CHAPTER II

CHARACTERISTICS OF LOW-INCOME, POWERLESS FAMILIES

Introduction

Poverty and powerlessness in Canada is rarely studied as a subjective phenomena, but as the literature shows, information on poverty and powerlessness as an objective phenomena is plentiful. It will be the goal of this chapter to offer a brief description of poverty as an objective and measurable phenomena. However, the major emphasis will be poverty and the resulting powerlessness as a subjective phenomena. The rationale for this is that people occupied with the ongoing problems of low-income families (such as community development workers and family advocates) must deal with the problem, at least in part, at the subjective human level where the statistics become persons with feelings and concerns.

There are two major problems in defining poverty. The first is that poverty is a relative concept, which statistically varies and alters through time and space. The second problem is that while statistical data compels the subject to be dealt with largely in terms of low-income, poverty means something more than simple income deficiency.

The problem of poverty in Canada, as a developed industrial society, is increasingly viewed not as sheer lack of essentials to sustain life, but as an insufficient access to certain goods, services and conditions of life which are available to a majority and have come to be accepted as basic to a decent, minimum standard of living. Poverty is a kind of low-income situation that carries with it a sense of entrapment and hopelessness. It is life lived without basic amenities and sealed off from opportunities and avenues to change the situation.

In their report on the City of Edmonton Special Project for Resource Mobilization for Employment, which involved a large number of social assistance families, Kupfer, Diadio and Magneson confirm the above:

Two different kinds of poverty, very closely inter-related became evident. First, there was poverty involving the simple lack of money. Second, there was a type of poverty characterized by demoralization, despair, and hopelessness. These individuals were lacking in the spirit of life and had simply resigned themselves to a vegetative kind of existence . . . During the last two years we were in contact with people who were experiencing both types of poverty simultaneously.¹

Poverty as an Objective Phenomena

The Fifth Annual Review of the Economic Council of Canada, The Challenge of Growth and Change² suggests an objective measure of the extent of low-income in Canada: this measure derives from a special study of the low-income population of Canada carried out by the Dominion Bureau

of Statistics on the basis of the 1961 Census.³ The measure suggested that low-income families and individuals were defined as those using sixty per cent or more of their income for food, clothing and shelter. On this basis, low-income families and individuals would include single persons with incomes below \$1,500., families of two with less than \$2,500., and families of three, four, and five or more with incomes of less than \$3,000., \$3,500., and \$4,000. respectively.⁴

Podoluk updated the poverty line for the use of the Senate Committee on Poverty.⁵ It is as follows:

Table 1
THE POVERTY LINE RELATED TO FAMILY SIZE

Family Size	1961	1969	1970	1971
1	\$1500.	\$ 2400.	\$ 2600.	\$ 2900.
2	2500.	4000.	4300.	4800.
3	3000.	4800.	5200.	5700.
4	3500.	5600.	6000.	6700.
5	4000.	6400.	6900.	7600.
6	4500.	7200.	7800.	8600.
10	6500.	10500.	11200.	12400.

This table shows the income at which persons are considered to be living in poverty. From these statistics, recognising their limitations, the Senate Committee on Poverty suggests that "at least one Canadian in every five suffers from poverty."⁶

Looking at the percentage distribution of low-income, nonfarm families, the Fifth Annual Review suggests the following:

1. Sixty-two per cent of low-income nonfarm families in 1961 lived in urban areas, and of this group more than half lived in metropolitan areas.
2. Eighty-three per cent of low-income nonfarm families lived elsewhere than in the Atlantic Provinces: fifty-three per cent of them lived in Ontario and the Western Provinces.
3. Sixty-eight per cent of the same group of families had heads who were in the labour force for at least part of the year.
4. Seventy-six per cent of the group had one or more earners in the family, and sixty-six per cent of families obtained most of their income from wage, salary, and self-employment earning.
5. Seventy-seven per cent of family heads in the group were under sixty-five years of age.
6. Eighty-seven per cent of families in the group were headed by men.⁷

The Dominion Bureau of Statistics has also produced some useful tabulations concerning the extent of urban poverty in Alberta, that indicate that poverty is widespread in Alberta, and that a large number of families are affected by the problems associated with a low income. (See tables 2 and 3.)

Table 2 suggests that 16.9 per cent of urban Alberta families live on an income of less than \$3,000. per year and 31.3 per cent of urban Alberta families have an income of less than \$4,000. per year. For individuals in urban areas of Alberta, the situation appears more

Table 2

PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION LIVING IN POVERTY AND
DEPRIVATION, ALBERTA URBAN AREAS, 1961

Family Status	Income Level	
	Under \$3,000.	Under \$4,000.
Families	16.9%	31.3%
	Under \$1,500.	Under \$2,000.
Non-family persons	40.3%	48.8%

Source: Dominion Bureau of Statistics, 1961 Census of Canada, Bulletin 4:1-3.

critical with 40.3 per cent living on incomes under \$1,500. and 48.8 per cent on incomes of less than \$2,000. It may be said that poverty is an extensive problem in urban Alberta.

By using the 1961 Poverty Line figures (see Table 1) and applying those figures to Table 3, one can see again the extent of family poverty within urban Alberta.

While these statistics present a picture of the fact of urban poverty in Alberta, they do not portray the struggles of families day-by-day and they do not indicate the ramifications and effects of low income on individuals and families.

Table 3

PERCENT DISTRIBUTION OF TOTAL FAMILY INCOME, BY FAMILY SIZE, SHOWING AVERAGE INCOMES, URBAN ALBERTA 1961

Income Group	Family Size					
	All Families	Two Persons	Three Persons	Four Persons	Five Persons	Six or more Persons
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Under \$1,000	3.1%	6.4%	2.6%	1.4%	1.1%	1.6%
\$1,000-\$1,999	5.8	13.1	4.2	2.5	2.1	1.9
\$2,000-\$2,999	8.0	12.5	8.8	5.7	4.8	4.3
\$3,000-\$3,999	14.4	15.1	16.4	13.4	12.2	13.4
\$4,000-\$4,999	16.9	13.1	17.6	18.7	19.3	18.8
\$5,000-\$5,999	15.3	11.5	15.6	17.0	18.1	17.6
\$6,000-\$6,999	11.6	9.7	11.4	13.1	12.5	12.1
\$7,000 or more	24.9	18.6	23.4	28.2	29.9	30.4
Average	\$5,894	\$4,944	\$5,723	\$6,299	\$6,612	\$6,819
No. Families	198,367	57,819	41,035	46,331	29,154	24,028

Source: Dominion Bureau of Statistics, 1961 Census of Canada, unpublished tabulations.

A Subjective View of Poverty and Associated Powerlessness

The underlying premise of the subjective approach to poverty and associated powerlessness is that the individual is poor (and powerless) as long as he feels poor, rejected, or alienated from the economic, political and cultural mainstream of society. The feeling of powerlessness and estrangement from society, from other individuals, from self at times, is seen as a result of the constant, fruitless struggle with the conditions imposed by a low income. Ian Adams, in reflecting on his youth says:

I believe it was during those years that I learned that poverty is in reality a small world, its boundaries defined by day to day confrontations with frustration, bitterness and deprivation. These encounters are the daily reminders to the poor of the barriers between them and the larger world of affluence.⁸

From reviewing the literature, and from working with low-income families who judged themselves to be powerless, the writer suggests that there are at least five aspects to this sense of powerlessness resulting from low-income and poverty. They are, briefly: (1) a feeling of being in a futureless position from which there is no escape, (2) a certain life-style of deprivation, (3) an increased dependency on "helping" agencies, (4) a low rate of mental health resulting from increased psychological and financial stress, and (5) the attitudes and beliefs held by the poor.

1. The Feeling of Futurelessness

Of all the feelings associated with powerlessness resulting from low-income, this is perhaps the most pervasive, the feeling that there is, because of exogenous factors, no escape from the current situation. Lack of money means that future planning cannot be done, that existence becomes a day-to-day dealing with crises and confrontations with the larger society. The poor, by and large, lack the alternatives and the opportunities to escape from their present situation. They lack the necessary skills, education and job experience to move out economically. Haggstrom notes in his discussion of the psychological characteristics of the poor, the following:

Caught in the present, the poor do not plan very much. They meet their troubles and take their pleasures on a moment-to-moment basis; their schemes are short term. Their time perspective is foreshortened by their belief that it is futile to think of the future There is a sense of inability to affect what will happen, a lack of conviction that it is within their power to affect their circumstances Pessimism and fatalism about being able to affect one's own situation stems from a feeling of being victimized by superordinates, capricious, and malevolent natural and social forces. Their lives appear to them to be fixed by the immutable forces of fate, luck and chance.⁹

The self-concept associated with this is a vicious circle. The individual sees himself as not being able to affect his social order, he tries, he fails, and his self-concept of failure is reinforced. His experience with the world adds to this low level of self esteem. As he attempts to make

decisions about his future, he is thwarted by exogenous forces which end up saying to him that any attempt is futile.

Because they must live with the day-to-day stress of literally not knowing when the next meal is coming, they must view life as unpatterned and unpredictable. One of the most common complaints to the writer by mothers on welfare was that because they had no money they were not able to buy ahead, take advantages of sales, or plan beyond the next welfare cheque. Much of their available energy is consumed by this living from crisis to crisis, from cheque to cheque, and thus there is little left over for future planning. For many low-income families, poverty is a third and fourth generation situation, and such a pervasive environment does not lend itself to hopefulness about the future, or making plans that might change the future. Not only is the feeling that an individual cannot affect society widespread among the poor, but increasingly the feeling that one cannot affect one's own future is a feeling that is a conviction among the poor.

2. The Effects of Low-Income Life Style (Deprivation)

Deprivation is relative. When it is defined as lack of resources relative to felt wants and needs, it is evident that Canada has a great gap between generally accepted social and economic goals and the extent to which

there are mechanisms available to achieve these goals.

Below, represented by the types of goods and services that are available, are illustrated some different acceptable points of a scale of living:

(a) Bare necessities--These are the goods and services required for physical survival alone, such as nutritional balance in foods, or shelter and clothing sufficient for protection from the elements.

(b) Conventional necessities--These are the goods and services without which an individual cannot get along in today's society. In a sense these are mandatory for "social survival," such as personal care items, clothing within a certain style range, electric lights, running water, etc.

(c) Commonplace wants--These are the goods and services to which virtually all aspire and which virtually all are able to attain. These make possible some sense of self-respect, of self-worth and social acceptability. Though they are not "necessities" in the sense of physical or social survival, they are so commonplace as to be regarded as necessities in terms of the prevailing level of living, and may be basic to the social and emotional well-being of families and individuals. Examples include variety in foods, and certain types of home furnishings.

(d) Prevailing wants--These are the goods and services to which virtually all aspire and which a majority are

able to attain. These enhance a family's or an individual's sense of self-respect, self-worth and social acceptability. Examples include television sets, automobiles, jewelry, etc.

(e) Luxuries--These are the goods and services to which many aspire but which few attain and enhance considerably a family's or an individual's sense of social worth.

Examples include certain kinds of jewellery, colour television sets, certain kinds of automobiles, etc.

Poverty is that point below which necessities--both bare necessities and conventional necessities--or essentials for both physical and social survival cannot be acquired. Resource deprivation, or deprivation of goods and services mean a number of things to those individuals included in the poverty sector of our society. There is a larger deprivation beyond goods and services and that is the power associated with what money will buy. In our society, money buys freedom to choose, freedom to do, freedom to get out of tight spots, freedom to move from debilitating environments, low levels of nutrition, and ongoing medical problems that cost money to prevent.

The absolute increase in the amount of money available to the poor is not the total solution to poverty. More money appears to implement the idea of equality while avoiding any threats to established centres of power. Because the amount of power purchasable with a given supply

of money decreases as a society acquires a larger supply of goods and services, the solution of raising the incomes of the poor is likely, if unaccompanied by other measures, to be ineffective. Where the poor live in serious deprivation of goods and services, an increase in the supply of those goods and services would be an important source of power, that is, of access to resources which satisfy crucial needs.

The scales or levels of living then, illustrate another kind of "poverty" other than this minimal level at which physical and social necessities are denied. This is a poverty of self-respect, of a sense of human dignity, of a sense of social and emotional well-being. For this thesis, the writer defines as deprivation that point in the scale of living below which there is an inability to acquire commonplace wants, generally regarded as necessities and, indeed, essential to a sense of human worth.

3. Increased Dependency

The fact of being powerless but with needs that must be met, leads the poor to be dependent on organizations, institutions and people who have as their goals helping people and meeting their needs. Typically people in the helping professions have offered direct assistance but have not viewed their task as sharing their acquired skills. Because the poor are generally desperate, they will accept almost any form of aid offered, and in any manner that it

is offered. This situation of dependency, either through internal personality characteristics of the receiver, or through social position, leads to apathy, hopelessness, conviction of the inability to act successfully, failure to develop skills and so on.

This speaks loudly to the person in poverty and the message is clear. That is, the individual is not able to act on his own and must be continually dependent on the other. The situation worsens when the other is not a satisfactory person to deal with, and yet the individual is caught, wanting perhaps a change in worker, but fearful of the possibility of losing his benefits if he asks for a change. The writer believes that the dependency of the poor is not primarily a neurotic need to occupy positions in social relationships, but rather it results from a deprivation of those minimal social resources, which the poor need and must seek.

Usually in our society the poor are targets of helping efforts made sometimes grudgingly, sometimes with a full heart, by people who are not themselves poor, who are in decision-making roles--people with power. I think we need to recognize that this effort, no matter how well-intentioned, is in essence a disabling one. It has, at its very heart, the creation of dependency and the reduction of self-esteem.¹⁰

4. Mental Illness

Poverty is perhaps the clearest example of disturbance-producing environments that lead to increased mental illness among the poor. Careful studies done in

Stirling County in Nova Scotia¹¹ indicate that the people in the lowest socio-economic level are most likely to experience mental illness. The Stirling County study discovered that people living in economically depressed communities run a greater risk of mental illness than those of similar socio-economic levels living in more fortunate areas, presumably because unemployment not only adds new stresses to people's lives, but also makes them socially and individually useless, thus creating further emotional burdens. As well, treatment was less readily available, and of a lower quality.

Ossenberg¹² found in his study of community opportunities in Calgary, Alberta that there is a high degree of alienation in low-income groups. He suggests that social alienation, that can lead to mental illness, is often attributable to social isolation from meaningful relationships with others in the community. This finding is supported by those of Kupfer *et al.*¹³ in their study of unemployed employable men in Edmonton. Social isolation grew from lack of money to seek leisure activities outside the home, lack of money to purchase suitable clothing to wear in public and so on, and led to an increasingly poor concept of self.

5. The Special Belief Systems Held by the Poor

Irelan¹⁴ in her research for the United States

Department of Health, Education, and Welfare suggests that the anomaly of life at the poverty line is evident. For people living in conditions of obvious helplessness, this belief system effects the way they live and behave. She notes three distinctive themes peculiar to lower socio-economic behaviour that result from this environment of powerlessness: fatalism, an orientation to the present, and authoritarianism.

The genuine powerlessness experienced by the poor is the source of their persistent fatalistic beliefs, beliefs in uncontrollable external forces. Thus, resignation becomes the coping mechanism, and this attitude acts as a brake on occupational and educational aspirations, and minimizes efforts to cope with deprivation and its consequences.

When so many of the existent and minimal resources must be used to deal with the present immediacies, there is little left over for dealing with the future. This obviously handicaps people for systematic economic and educational planning and means that frequently opportunities must be passed up.

The authoritarian theme is a strong one as it is linked with the dependency syndrome mentioned earlier. This theme validates the belief in might as the source of authority and in the rightness of existing systems. This means that there is a heavy emphasis on authority in

decision-making.

It is at this personal, subjective level that the community development worker, the family advocate, or the social worker must respond. The feelings of futurelessness, the life styles of deprivation, the increased dependency of the poor, their low level of mental health, and the special beliefs that they hold are all areas of concern requiring the skills of the professional and the participation of the families in seeking resolution. Because the poor frequently live from crisis to crisis, it is often at the crisis level that contact and resolution can begin. The description of this process of intervention at the crisis level with follow-up designed to aid low-income families in making necessary social changes and becoming more competent in coping with their problems is found in the following chapter.

FOOTNOTES

¹G. Kupfer, et al., Final Report Resource Mobilization for Employment (Edmonton: The City of Edmonton Social Service Department, 1970), p. 175.

²Economic Council of Canada, Fifth Annual Review, The Challenge of Growth and Change (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1968), pp. 108-121.

³J. R. Podoluk, Incomes of Canadians (Ottawa: Dominion Bureau of Statistics Monograph, 1968).

⁴Economic Council of Canada, op. cit., p. 109.

⁵Senate Committee on Poverty, Memorandum to Staff, (Undated).

⁶Economic Council of Canada, op. cit., p. 110.

⁷Ibid., p. 113.

⁸I. Adams, The Poverty Wall (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1970), p. 15.

⁹W. C. Haggstrom, "The Power of the Poor," Poverty: Power and Politics, ed. by C. I. Waxman (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1968), p. 15.

¹⁰B. M. Beck, "How Do We Involve the Poor?" Poverty: Power and Politics, ed. by C. I. Waxman (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1968), p. 271.

¹¹D. C. Leighton, et al., The Stirling County Study of Psychiatric Disorder and Socio-Cultural Environment (New York: Basic Books, 1963), p. 191.

¹²R. J. Ossenberg, Calgary Study: Community Opportunity Assessment (Edmonton: Executive Council, Government of Alberta, 1967), p. 72.

¹³G. Kupfer, et al., op. cit., p. 61.

¹⁴L. M. Irelan, ed., Low Income Life Styles (Washington: Department of Health, Education and Welfare, 1961), p. 5.

CHAPTER III

THE CONCEPT OF FAMILY ADVOCACY

Introduction

With the encouragement of the Family Service Association of America, the Family Service Association of Edmonton began planning the Advocacy Project during the winter of 1970, in order to respond more positively and realistically to the problems of their low-income client families. Family advocacy was chosen primarily because of the effectiveness of its two-pronged approach to the problems of low-income families. That is, the family advocate would intervene at the crisis level determined by the family itself, and then encourage and motivate the family to become involved in the policy-making that over time would offer long-range solutions to, and perhaps prevent repetition of the crises that originally brought them to the agency.

This chapter will describe Family Advocacy, its nature and the techniques used. The role of the advocate at the Family Service Association of Edmonton is offered first. This will be followed by an examination of the historical roots of advocacy, and the rationale for its use. Finally the techniques of advocacy will be examined.

The Role of the Advocate

During the early stages of the establishment of the Advocacy Project at the Family Service Association of Edmonton, a memorandum to staff was circulated, the contents of which appear below, defining the parameters of the project within the agency. While the question of commitment will be considered more thoroughly in Chapter Six of the thesis, it is interesting to note what the agency felt were the dimensions of this project, especially with regard to radical action.

. . . Thus the purpose of the family advocate is as follows:

1. To help families clarify their own needs, both emotional and social.
2. To develop effective strategies to deal with systems that are failing to meet these needs.
3. To secure a fair share of existing resources and services on behalf of families served.
4. To develop new resources and services where these are required.
5. To help other agencies work more closely with people for whom change is sought.
6. To be a casework enabler in extending the boundaries in which casework functions.
7. To use situation diagnosis to determine treatment plans.
8. To create an atmosphere in which the system does not seem to lose through change but to highlight the fact that both the system and society can and do benefit from such change.
9. To mobilize emergency resources.

10. To be an information source regarding law, legislation, landlord-tenant agreements, educational policy, manpower policy, and to demonstrate resourcefulness in terms of knowing about existing community resources.
11. To practice adult education both with professionals and with clients in helping them to be more effective in achieving their stated needs.

The advocate should have the following qualities:

1. Resourcefulness in terms of existing community resources in Edmonton.
2. Credentials, both professional and academic, that are acceptable to a systems society.
3. Sensitivity to people and their needs, and a basic awareness of interviewing techniques.
4. A background in inter-professional and multi-agency collaboration.
5. Expertise in specialized areas such as debt counselling, legislation, economics and political science.
6. An interest in and ability to research and use workable alternatives in recommending change to the system.
7. A sound knowledge of political systems and how to use them.
8. An undefinable quantity of anger and aggressiveness and a lack of willingness to accept "policy" without question.¹

While this is a partial description of the advocacy thrust in Edmonton, the impetus for such action came from the examination carried out by the Family Service Association of America, into possible means of improving on the traditional methods of responding to low-income families.

The Historical Development of Advocacy and Its Rationale

Historically, the citizen consumer has been responded to in several ways. During World War II, England established a Citizens' Advice Bureau as a place to obtain both advice and protection. Each bureau is autonomous, but accredited by a national office. Seventy per cent of the bureaus have unpaid staff, and are supported through voluntary contributions and public subsidy. The four hundred bureaus receive over one million requests yearly, half concerning family affairs and housing. The Citizens' Advice Bureau attempts beyond direct intervention, like family advocacy, to promote and modify legislation.²

Another European example of early third-party intervention is the development of the position of Ombudsman. The Ombudsman is chiefly concerned with areas where government bureaucracy has exceeded its authority and has failed to follow approved procedures, or has shown some form of administrative abuse. Legislation establishing the office of an Ombudsman was passed in Alberta in 1967, to allow for investigation of administrative decisions and acts of officials of the government and its agencies. In the year ending October 31, 1970, Alberta's Ombudsman received 791 complaints that were within his jurisdiction to investigate.

However, as Rein and Riessman³ suggest, third-party intervention in the European experience appears limited to the areas of citizen education and the abuse of authority:

They do not constitute, per se, a special machinery to protect the interests of the consumer. The citizen is by and large not defined as an interest group in need of protection against the abuse of administrative discretion They also differ in their definition of the service recipients. The Citizens' Advice Bureau, like the traditional American services, is concerned with the uninformed, the Ombudsman with the aggrieved.⁴

In order to move beyond the traditional forms of third-party intervention, the Community Action Programs in the United States, as early as 1966, proposed third-party intervention strategies aimed at enabling the poor to demand more services, while allowing community institutions to provide the relevant services more readily and more humanely. The rationale behind this is that typically the user of social services is faced with a fragmented system of services. The traditional approach in dealing with this fragmentation has been voluntary cooperation among suppliers of services through such techniques as case consultations, or through voluntary welfare councils where representatives of the suppliers of services try to resolve community issues. Lack of coordination has been viewed as an information failure that more knowledge could mend. In the meantime, the client or service user is still faced with his unresolved issue which originally brought him to an agency.

Thus, the Community Action Program suggested third-party intervention (using advocates or expeditors) to respond to both the supply and demand sides of the social

service delivery system. This would lead to a reduction of the fragmentation, an increase in the coherence of the welfare system, and a facilitation of more humane and equitable distributions of resources. The Community Action Program strategy suggested that consumer demand would be increased by decentralization and increased access and viability of services. Use of services would be expedited through intervention, interpretation and negotiation. Expediting could be reinforced by development of community action groups around specific problems the community had defined.⁵

Specht⁶ offers a second rationale for the use of advocacy. In his opinion, traditional services have met only the immediate felt needs of the client group, and thus no change in the institutional system which perhaps caused the problem is effected. He notes:

If the community developer fails to see a connection between what takes place in the earlier stages of the urban community development process and the need for long-range plan of societal change, he will help foster and encourage the apolitical and anti-intellectual attitudes which he will meet when he starts his work in the local community. While it is necessary to respond to the poor "where they are" and "at their level" the community developer must beware of the danger of seeing organizing activities as ends in themselves.

It is only as the developer helps the community organization to develop a theory about the educational system, or unemployment, or the welfare system, that the community organization is able to move beyond the solution of problems experienced by some of its members to take account

of the institutional system which generates the problems.⁷

This points out again, the benefits of the two thrusts of advocacy, intervention at the crisis level, and follow-through at the level of social change and policy-making.

In viewing the quality of their services to multi-problem, low-income families, the Family Service Association of America selected the third rationale for the use of advocacy. That is, they accepted the advocacy concept that families themselves would be involved in the advocacy actions. Traditionally, family counsellors have been trained to individualize human needs and to subsequently offer services based on a professional diagnosis of the psychological and social factors relevant to the individual situation. The Family Service Association of America has noted, however, an increasing gap between the individual case of social injustice and broad scale social action. It is no longer enough to help the individual by giving him coping skills. Rather, skills should be shared with the client that would help him affect the systems and institutions at the root of his problem of powerlessness. Literature of the Family Service Association of America⁸ suggests that rather than assisting families to drift towards adjustment, the family advocate should be prepared to assist families in changing those institutions and organizations where they are not responsive to the needs of the people they were set up to serve.

Family Advocacy is a move toward bridging the gap, but within the regular agency functioning. It delineates a basic function of the case worker and assures a continuing link with the action program. It recognizes the professional obligation (not option) of the worker for social action, for fighting through to the finish for clients' rights and needs. The concept of family advocacy also embraces the vital principle of involving the client in the action, of helping the client to help himself in this area as well as in that of the individual and family function.⁹

Thus there are three rationales for the use of the advocacy thrust. First, the advocate working both with the supplier of social services, and the user of social services might facilitate a higher quality of service. Second, advocacy moves beyond the traditional approaches of immediate assistance into the area of social change. Third, the client group, individuals or families, are involved at all stages of the action. In the words of the Family Service Association of America, advocacy is moving "from case to cause,"¹⁰ with its two-pronged approach of crisis intervention and social policy-making.

In order to facilitate these actions, techniques of advocacy have been developed and they are offered below.

Techniques of Advocacy

Robert Sunley, currently director of the Nassau County, New York, Family Service Association, delineates fourteen forms of intervention suitable for an advocacy program in a family agency.¹¹ Sunley notes that more than

one method is usually included in an action program with the result that the staff of an agency with their clients can be involved in various ways.

Family agencies have traditionally used only a small number of the many kinds of interventions available for an advocacy program. The selection of which interventions to use in a given issue is a complex one, involving the nature of the problem, the objective, the nature of the adversary, the degree of militancy to which the agency will go, and the effectiveness of the method, generally,¹² and in relation to certain kinds of situations.¹²

The fourteen techniques of intervention are offered below with comments on how they relate to the Edmonton situation, and while they do not exhaust the possibilities, they do suggest the wide range of techniques suitable for a family advocacy program.

1. Studies and Surveys

Studies and surveys often form the groundwork for further action, both in terms of the advocacy program and in terms of educational and publicity purposes. Any advocacy work must be documented in order that embarrassing loopholes are exposed and the efforts of the advocate lessened because of poor research and preparation.

2. Expert Testimony

With the backing of such studies and surveys, the advocate is better prepared to give expert advice either on behalf of the client group or as a representative of the agency supporting the advocacy work. In Canada, this

technique frequently takes the form of appearances in front of commissions, and government-established committees and task forces, and the presentation of briefs to these groups.

3. Case Conferences with Other Agencies

Traditionally, this method has been a common practice among social agencies to effect change in another agency. By presenting conditions and the results of certain practices affecting client groups, the agency hopes to persuade another agency to change those practices or policies. Case conferences are also useful in forming linkages between agencies offering other forms of services as part of the social service delivery system.

This method may be of value in early stages of an advocacy effort, especially if it can involve higher officials of the other agency. It also elicits much about the potential adversary organization and may help to clarify just where the crux of the problem lies--at the level of staff practice, supervision, middle or top administration, board or beyond the agency. Such conferences held with clients present can have other values as well and may be the first step in developing a client group determined to go further in action on its own behalf.¹³

As well, joint action helps to overcome the gaps in the social services delivery system, and is useful in collaborative planning with families, when many skills are involved such as debt counselling, welfare assistance, temporary homemaker services, and legal advice.

4. Interagency Committees

Interagency committees, while typically involving a great deal of time, offer the advantages of case conferences mentioned above, but can also be developed into permanent bodies which can represent yet another method of joint action in a community. As well as having the advantage of offering many different perceptions of social issues in a community or on a specific area of concern, interagency committees offer a good deal more political weight than one agency acting on its own, and again can offer further linkages of client groups around specified shared concerns.

5. Educational Methods

Educational methods are clearly divided into two sections, that of educating the general public and public officials as to the nature of social issues, and that of private, non-directive education with fellow colleagues and client groups. The latter is more process-oriented than the content orientation of education of the public. Another way of viewing this non-directive educational process would be under the term motivation, creating learning environments that allow the client group to acquire the knowledge they deem as important and useful.

With regard to that non-directive form of education, Whitford, an early community development worker in Alberta suggests:

If people lack answers to their social problems or knowing the answer, lack the skill or knowledge or self-confidence to try to solve the problems, then the role of the community development worker is to help to supply that skill, knowledge and self-confidence. The community development worker will create learning situations of varying degrees of complexity to meet the actual needs of people. For example, he might show people how to write a letter but he will not become the community amanuensis or if people want to learn how to shear sheep he might suggest that they invite a local sheep farmer or extension worker from the university to instruct in sheep shearing. One important rule for the worker to remember is that every time he does something which the citizens could have done themselves he has robbed them of a learning experience and to that degree has retarded the community development process.¹⁴

Michel Blondin, spokesman for the Animation Sociale programs in Quebec, notes another aspect of the educational process which he calls universalization.¹⁵ This is the process whereby the client group broadens its awareness and moves from the local situation to the greater society.

There cannot be any self-help projects without there being at the same time an increasingly comprehensive awareness of the situation of those who take part in it. It means seeing the present situation and placing it in the broader context of our whole society . . . It is by stressing this awakening of an awareness that will become progressively broader that it will become acceptable to question the very foundations of our society, to examine them from different angles and to question them again to the extent that it is necessary.¹⁶

Motivational skills will be discussed at length in Chapter Four. However, it is well to note at this juncture that in the opinion of the writer, the sharing of skills, and the motivational process are at the heart of advocacy,

especially family advocacy. Without these, advocacy becomes only intervention rather than action leading to social policy-making and change.

6. Position-taking

This technique of advocacy is generally only effective when the agency is the first to take a public stance, or if the stance has enough weight behind it to be particularly effective. Sunley feels, generally, that it is of more importance internally to a family agency to communicate to the agency staff and clientele that a certain position is taken, and that the agency per se is prepared to follow through with specific action.

There are two possible problems attached to position-taking. It is the writer's view that position-taking can have a limiting effect as it is viewed by the public outside the agency as a definite stand, and therefore unchangeable. This may well serve to prevent further exploration of issues with other agencies. The other related problem is that when an agency is run by a board structure as is the case of the Family Service Association of Edmonton the position may be taken long after it will have any effect, which serves to slow down action on issues even more.

7. Administrative Redress

Governmental bodies generally provide for various

steps to appeal decisions at the practice level. While such steps may appear to delay action, they may well be the preliminary work for court actions, for example, or useful in calling the attention of higher officials to people-level problems. Where the imperfect working of a system has resulted in an injustice to one client, grievance procedures through (in the Alberta case) an ombudsman, the Department of Social Development Grievance Committee, or an advocate, can result in a correction for that one person. It is important to note that the action should not stop there. This is one of the essential points of advocacy, that it moves from intervention for and with an individual or a small group of people, to the larger battle of social policy-making or social change, in order to ensure that the imperfect workings of a system do not repeat themselves.

8. Demonstration Projects

Demonstration projects are generally considered to be long term methods of advocacy.

They [demonstration projects] may be necessary in order to elicit the specific material needed for advocacy, and to help a group or community develop the awareness, leadership and determination to embark upon a course of action. Further advocacy is usually needed to carry the message of the demonstration project into a larger scale service or institutional change affecting the total population involved in a problem.¹⁷

The Family Service Association in Edmonton has had a long history of embarking on demonstration projects

in the hope that they would prove themselves and be funded eventually as full-time services.

Demonstration projects may also serve as alternatives to current social services that are not completely meeting the need for which they were established. An example of this would be the F.U.T.U.R.E. Society* set up to counsel, and assist in re-establishing ex-convicts back into the community. This is also the task of the John Howard Society in Edmonton. The F.U.T.U.R.E. Society believes that it is an alternative to the John Howard Society and an irritant to challenge the John Howard Society in re-evaluating its program and its effectiveness.

9. Direct Contacts with Officials and Legislators

This advocacy technique is similar to that of administrative redress where the agency may approach officials and legislators to formally make known positions, give relevant information, or protest actions performed or contemplated. Informal meetings with officials may allow for information transfer, exploration of alternatives and planning.

10. Coalition Groups

These can be described as ad hoc groupings of organizations around a specific objective. The advantages

*This is the full title of this organization.

lie not only in the combination of forces but in the fact that agencies and their clients do not have to bear the burden and risk separately. The coalition concept also points to the involvement of disparate types of organizations and groups which maintain autonomy while pursuing a common goal. The drawbacks involved are the dangers of setting goals that are too general, methods that are ineffective in their lack of risk, and a proliferation of meetings and committees that seek to clarify and cooperate, but not act.

11. Client Groups

Moving from intervention to social policy-making and social change means, within the framework of advocacy, increased client involvement. The wide-scale development of the potential of client groups has occurred only recently and has revealed that this is a major instrument of social change. Increasingly this is well-documented in current social science literature. By client groups is meant any local group or grouping of individuals sharing a problem. While they are not the traditional agency "clients" they are so termed in the sense that they are in some way helped through an agency service.

The role that the advocate plays in this form of advocacy is the classical community development role of skill sharing, motivation, consultation, and collaboration with other resources. As Sunley notes:

This service may be limited to giving some impetus to the forming of the group, but may continue in the form of consultation to the group, supportive efforts in such ways as helping the group obtain information or gain access to certain people, or mounting collaborative efforts with other community groups. . . . Through community contacts the advocate may help in bringing several groups together to develop coalitions; he may also suggest various methods of action for the group's consideration.¹⁸

It is not appropriate at this point to review the considerable literature on client groups and this method of social change. There are, however, two dangers inherent in this approach. First, the temptation is for the advocate to be too directive and too verbal, and not to remain with the client group where it is. This is perhaps the result of poor educational processes. Second is the failure to develop other sources of support toward the same general objectives and to help the group relate to other sources in a meaningful but autonomous way.

As Specht notes:

If excessive value is placed on "participation," the developer raises what is only a principle to an end; this allows the community developer to rejoice over the personal satisfactions his clients experience in the organization--their "rebirth through doing"--while the issues and problems which concern the community organization remain unrelated to their sources in the institutional structure.¹⁹

As well as being unfulfilling for the client group, the issue remains unsolved. Thus, the satisfaction gained from a successful endeavour will not be experienced by the client group.

12. Petitions

To the extent that petitions call attention to a specific issue, they may be of value. Getting petitions signed is an activity valuable to a new group in that it mobilizes members around a specific action and gives them an opportunity to talk with people about the issues, develops their abilities at making public contacts, attracting new members, and formulating points and rebuttals. However, one must wonder about the efficacy of petitions as they are received by whoever they are initially directed to. It may well be a technique that has become outdated, making little if any noticeable impact.

13. Persistent Demands

This method, in effect, means bombardment of officials, policy makers and legislators, going beyond the usual channels of appeal. It represents a kind of escalation of a campaign and may be directed against figures inaccessible or unwilling to submit to personal contact. While within lawful limits, it may be the precursor to harassment or other extra-legal means.

14. Demonstrations and Protests

Within the body of knowledge surrounding community development as a practice, such radical actions are considered the last resort in achieving desired social change. Sometimes massive confrontation is seen as the

only means left to the citizen public to achieve the ends which they feel are necessary for society. It is the writer's observation that an agency such as the usual kind of Family Service Association, run as it is by a board of "good" well-to-do citizens is likely to be reluctant to use these advocacy techniques because of sullying its image. However, the extent to which any agency participates in these methods will have to be determined within the agency. It will have to consider carefully whether its other forms of action are not being conducted from too far behind the firing line, and whether commitment may not require some such firing line activity at times. It is always a difficult decision to make and one in which alternatives and costs must be weighed.

Summary

It is hoped that the use of a variety of such interventions both at the level of family crisis and at the level of social change will lead to an improvement in social services, active pursuit of social change, and the involvement of client families at all levels of action. These are the goals of advocacy. The chapter which follows suggests that these are also the goals of community development, and that commonalities exist as well between community development and family advocacy in terms of the client groups using the services, and the processes involved in achieving the goals.

FOOTNOTES

¹Family Service Association of Edmonton, Memorandum to Staff, (May 6, 1970).

²M. Rein and F. Riessman, "A Strategy for Antipoverty Community Action Programs," Social Work (April, 1966), p. 7

³Ibid., p. 8.

⁴Ibid., p. 8.

⁵Ibid., p. 6.

⁶H. Specht, Urban Community Development: A Social Work Process (Contra Costa Council of Community Services, Walnut Creek, California, 1966), pp. 33-34.

⁷Ibid., p. 43.

⁸Family Service Association of America, Summary of Family Advocacy Program (November, 1969), Memorandum to Member Agencies.

⁹R. Sunley, "Family Advocacy: From Case to Cause," Social Casework (June, 1970), p. 348.

¹⁰Family Service Association of America, op. cit.

¹¹Sunley, op. cit., pp. 348-354.

¹²Sunley, op. cit., p. 352.

¹³Sunley, op. cit., p. 352.

¹⁴J. Whitford, "Toward a More Restricted Definition of Community Development," The Pas, Manitoba, 1970, p. 14. (Mimeoographed.)

¹⁵M. Blondin, "Animation Sociale as Developed and Practiced by Le Conseil des Oeuvres de Montreal," Montreal, Quebec, 1968, p. 4. (Mimeoographed.)

¹⁶Ibid., p. 4

¹⁷Sunley, op. cit., p. 353.

¹⁸Sunley, op. cit., p. 354.

¹⁹Specht, op. cit., p. 43.

CHAPTER IV

FAMILY ADVOCACY IN THE CONTEXT
OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Introduction

Definitions of community development abound across a broad range of social science, agricultural economics and extension literature. It is the purpose of this chapter to define community development by comparing several well-known definitions, defining the client group, and suggesting broadly the typical steps through which the community development process moves. The author then will position family advocacy in the field of community development, demonstrating that the goals, client group, and practice of community development and family advocacy are similar.

Defining Community Development

If definitions of community development were put on a continuum, the two extremes would offer two separate functions of community development, which when linked together, form a workable definition of community development as a human relationship process, and a total resource development process. The human relationship process becomes the means to total resources development. Hynam¹ offers possibly one of the few definitive articles on

community development in Canada, and suggests two terminologies to divide and describe community development more clearly: social animation for community development as process, and human resource development for community development as program. From this dichotomization, Hynam puts forth the following hypothesis:

Where development projects are concerned there is a high positive correlation between success, and Social Animation in the initial stages of endeavour.²

Hynam goes on to warn community development workers that without social animation, that is, without the necessary education and motivation in a community, the development program has a low chance of success, but that too much animation may mean that the community never experiences success in meeting its stated felt needs.

How long should Social Animation be continued before Human Resources Development begins to take over. This will vary from situation to situation but it is suggested here that it may be better in this connection to think in terms of years than in weeks or months. But when process has been effective and the people begin to ask for specific assistance it is of the utmost importance that the relevant specialists and bureaucracies be ready with their programs, or a main result of the success of Social Animation will be increased frustration.³

If the goal of community development is, as Hynam suggests, total resources development, then there is associated with this goal some other elements attached to defining community development beyond social animation as process, and human resource development as

program. Hynam offers an example of an additional element to any definition of community development when he gives the example of the Government of Alberta establishing a Community Development branch within the Human Resources Development Authority with direct consultation at the ministerial level possible. He suggests that community development workers serve to remind government bureaucrats that they are the servants of the people, but at the same time educating the public in their realization of this, and in their facilitating the mutual use of services. As will be seen later, these educative and facilitative functions of community development are important additional elements leading to desired social change.

Bregha,⁴ a professor of social work at the University of Toronto, notes a third aspect to this broad definition of community development when he suggests that community development must be concerned with both the problem of attitudes on the part of the disenfranchised and the poor, and on the attitudes of the larger society leading to the needed requisite structural changes that allow for full participation of the total population in society.

This is what distinguishes community development strategies from more service-oriented strategies. For community development the provision for and the delivery of services is only one and perhaps the least important aspect. Its main thrust and principal raison d'etre as a method of intervention is to form the causes and conditions shaping the quality of life in a society so that as few

people as possible in it would depend on any kind of service.⁵

This means that Bregha views community development as a dependency-reduction process, whereby people move away from the welfare state and into the service state.⁶ This would include a process of full participation in decision-making, even though government bodies are still providing many of the financial resources necessary for increasing the quality of life. Bregha views this process as a redistribution of power as well as the historically accepted redistribution of resources and productivity. As such, he does not view community development only as a system-maintenance process.

Popenoe⁷ would add his support to this requisite attitude change suggested by Bregha, when he states that if we are successfully to cope with the contemporary human condition, we must change both the society and the individual, simultaneously. Both in theory and practice, this is what community development means, the simultaneous change in the individual, and in the larger society in which the individual must function, through social policy-making and social change.

Popenoe states two environments to which community development is pertinent. There is the objective physical and social environment in which life takes place, and the intangible environment of individual feelings. The implication for community development is

that the primary concern of such development is with both the objective environment and the subjective emotional environment within which individuals find meaning and value. This particular thought can be subsumed under Hynam's discussion stated earlier, that the first thing that must occur in the preparatory period is social animation that gives a renewed meaning and value to the disenfranchised's view of life. Next, the developer must deal with the physical and social environment which has until that time, not offered much of personal meaning and value to people.

In summary, perhaps the clearest and fullest definition is that offered by the Privy Council of Canada, Special Planning Secretariat:

Community Development is an educational-motivational process designed to create conditions favourable to economic and social change, if possible on the initiative of the community, but if this initiative is not forthcoming spontaneously, then techniques for arousing and stimulating it in order to secure fullest participation of the community must be utilized.⁸

While the definition does not specifically mention Hynam's dichotomy of process and program, it does infer "program" in the creating of conditions favouring economic and social change, and suggests that social animation consists of education and motivation. It also includes Bregha's concern regarding redistribution when it refers to creating conditions favourable to economic and social change, perhaps more by omitting any reference to anything

else, than by actually stating Bregha's concern. It does not however, except to the extent of mentioning the fullest possible participation, deal with Bregha and Popenoe's concern for the requisite and two-pronged attitude change required, but again this is inferred. In summary, the definition provided by the Special Planning Secretariat of the Privy Council is the most useful one for this thesis.

The Client Group of Community Development

In the writer's opinion, the focus of community development should be on that sector of the population for whom the democratic system does not appear to work, the disadvantaged, the lower-class welfare recipients, the chronic poor, groups characterized by apathy and estrangement, and those who see no clear channels of communication with change agents designated in our society, or as Whitford states it:

It is this relationship, between the powerful and the powerless, the haves and the have-nots, the poor (in the sociological and psychological sense as well as the economic sense) and the non-poor, to which community development addresses itself.⁹

While keeping in mind Hynam's view that community development should address itself to the total community, the community development worker finds himself forced to be particularly active in special areas of need. The poor, for instance, need special assistance in learning the things that the non-poor learned long ago. In order to obtain the objectives of community development of improving

the quality of life for all citizens, the community development worker does spend a disproportionate amount of time with this client group.

At the same time, it is obvious that the other sectors of the population cannot be ignored, especially if the attitude changes requisite are to transpire, and a mutual education process is deemed necessary to occur. As Hynam and Whitford suggest, the community development worker makes linkages and develops relationships between apparently disparate groups of people who hold seemingly disparate, and opposing values and ideas, who are, however, linked together.

The Practice of Community Development Theory

The Privy Council definition of community development offered earlier in this chapter states that the initiative for development action should rest with the community, but that if it does not, then other techniques for arousing and stimulating the community should be used. When the client group is disadvantaged, this initiative is rarely forthcoming. Thus it must be sought out, developed, and supported by the community development worker. How this is done, is, of course, the essential core of any meaningful discussion of community development.

Whitford¹⁰ suggests at least six things that the community development worker must do:

1. Communicate

In order to communicate with all sectors of the community, the worker needs to be aware of the values held by the community, needs to understand how the social structure of the community operates, needs to be aware of the community's resources both physical and human, and finally needs to be aware of the felt needs and the problem issues that are evident to the community or to sections of it. While being able to understand these issues, the community development worker must also be aware that his actions speak as his words speak, and that his values and motives must also be understood by the community.

2. Organize

In order to educate and motivate (carry on social animation) the community development worker must organize the unorganized. It is clear to Whitford, and to others, that people are more readily organized around their own common felt needs, needs to which they may be able to find some solutions.

3. Create Learning Situations

It is interesting to note that Whitford specifies the creation of learning situations rather than the role of the development worker as teacher. This is sound educational psychology, for it has been proved that people learn best when they are encouraged to learn, when they are in a situation important to them, when they must learn in order

to acquire a skill so that they may achieve their stated goals.

Being able to define the community's felt needs is the first step in this educational procedure. The next step of course is to broaden the knowledge base so that the local residents can understand the larger social situations with which they will be faced. This is one of the foundations of the social animation process--an increasingly comprehensive awareness of the situation in which the individuals find themselves.

The community development worker, if he is truly committed, will share his skills, rather than doing the job for the citizen, thereby increasing the knowledge base, but also, and perhaps more importantly, sharing information and making linkages between citizens and information resources. If this task is done well the citizenry are prepared to carry on in the absence of the community development worker.

4. Motivate

Beyond the motivation involved in the educational part of the community development process, motivation is required when the time comes for the citizens to act on their felt needs by moving into the problem-solving process. Given the client group that the community development worker functions with, there will be vast psychological and sociological barriers to overcome. The population is

apathetic, and lacks confidence in its individualized ability to solve problems. However, there is safety in numbers, and a collectivity has a much better chance to achieve the desired goals if given the right kind of support and motivation. The understanding is that clear educational work has been provided initially, and that the citizenry are clear as to the directions they wish to take and the resources which they wish to utilize. Motivation comes from the support of the community development worker, but more importantly from the people themselves through the defining of problems and the establishment of a plan of action.

5. Encourage Local Leadership and Followership

Obviously local leadership must be developed if projects which have arisen and will continue to arise are to be carried out without increased dependency on the community development worker. If the educational and motivational processes have been successful, the development of local leadership should not be a difficult process. However, as Whitford notes, followership has often been, in the past, a problem at the local level. Unless the community leader has the support of the citizenry, the community projects are doomed. The community development worker must then insure that a local leader has emerged from the population rather than been selected by an outside group,

and that he does have the support of the local community.

6. Phase Out

Whether or not the community worker physically moves out of the community or not, he must eventually, having educated the population, move out of any possible dependency relationship between himself and the community. This has been the major source of failure for community projects in the past. The community development worker may move on to other projects rather than moving out of the community, but it must be clear to the citizenry right from the start that he functions only as a temporary animator and that by and large, the motivation for change must be found within the citizen group themselves. This in itself, when learned, can act as a tremendous asset to the community.

It should be clear that community development is not something which the worker does. Rather it is a process of social animation that eventually leads through this process to programs that are both meaningful to the community and which lead to the greater human resources development.

Family Advocacy and Community Development

While family advocacy has been extensively defined in the previous chapter, the writer now wishes to place family advocacy in the context of community development, analyzing the similarities and differences. If indications from the United States can be used to predict possible

approaches in Canada, then this section of the thesis is important because a large number of family counselling agencies are adopting family advocacy as one of their approaches. However, among the member agencies of the Family Service Association of America very few advocates will have had community development training and the writer views this specialized training as a necessary requisite for the position of family advocate. The most significant reason is that the parameters out of which a family advocate could act, might be severely limited by the past actions of any Family Service agency. If this were the case then advocacy could lose a great deal of impact, and an opportunity to view the total community rather than just the usual client group of Family Agencies.

In review, family advocacy is a strategy used in working primarily with distressed families, and has a two-pronged approach--intervention at the individual and family level, and a moving of the agency staff and client group into the larger area of social policy-making and social change, at the agency level, the family level, and the level of the larger society. These two thrusts are similar to the principal thrusts of community development outlined by Hynam--social animation and human resource development, or process and program. Thus, it would be a good idea to regard family advocacy in the light of process and the client group, similar to the review of community development earlier in this chapter.

The Goals of Family Advocacy

Family advocacy, simply put, was established to bridge the gap between the client group and agencies set up to serve that group, much as one goal of community development is to be the "conscience of the government"¹¹ to work in two directions, encouraging citizenry to use government resources, and encouraging government resources to be more meaningful and helpful to the client group.

As well, the family advocacy program was to work at motivational and educational concerns with families who, over long periods of time, had been unable to participate in decision-making and were labelled as chronic poor. Built into the advocacy approach is a commitment to involve individuals in determining and meeting their felt needs.

In a discussion of the special problems facing community development in large urban areas, Hynam¹² suggests that one possible solution is the centralization of policy-making, and the decentralization of implementation. This has been a stance adopted by advocacy programs in the United States, although not as yet among the member agencies in Canada.

As Bregha suggests, community development should be looking at redistribution of power, and resources. Certainly, current advocacy approaches are looking at redistribution of income and resources, but in the writer's opinion most family agencies, especially those that are

publicly funded, see the redistribution of power as threatening and thus, unnecessary. This issue will be expanded in Chapter Six of this thesis. Redistribution of power is still dealt with by family advocates only at the level of improving the quality and relevance of organizational policies and services. As practiced at the Family Service Association of Edmonton, family advocacy is still viewed largely as maintaining the current situation although the theoretical constructs of family advocacy are very much opposed to this.

One of the concerns of the writer is the difficulty in achieving the goal of community development in reducing the dependency of families on outside agencies and institutions. The theory surrounding family advocacy would certainly support this dependency-reduction, but in practice it is difficult to judge whether or not it is occurring. With intervention as a principal thrust of family advocacy, there is a tendency to be worker oriented, with the worker being the problem-solver rather than the sharer of skills with the client group. Associated with this is that traditional family counselling agencies have typically given clients coping skills to deal with their problems rather than giving them the motivation and encouragement to change the situations in which they find themselves. While part of this traditional attitude can be attributed to the generally conservative approach of social workers,

it means that the change in attitude requisite on the part of the client, and on the part of the other members of the larger society rarely takes place, unless the family advocate is committed to this aspect of the approach.

The Client Group of Family Advocacy

As stated earlier in this thesis, the client group of the family advocate, as that role is currently practiced out of traditional casework agencies, is far more limited than the client population of community development. It is obvious that generally only distressed families seek out the services of counselling agencies, and thus the client group is limited by these parameters. This does not mean that outside the traditional agency this would necessarily be true, but as practiced at the Family Service Association of Edmonton, the client group has been limited to the chronic and situational poor. Through the ongoing work of the family advocate, other linkages are made with other agency staff, other bureaucrats and so on, but the linkages do not extend generally to the total community as they would in community development.

The Practice of Family Advocacy

Carl Taylor¹³ has suggested that the initial stages of community development are as follows:

1. The first step in community development is systematic discussion of common felt needs by members of the community . . .

2. The second step in community development is systematic planning to carry out the first self-help undertaking that has been selected by the community.

These steps assume that the initial encounter with the client group has already occurred. The process of entree with the client group within the bounds of family advocacy is somewhat different. Family advocacy is based, in practice at least, on a referral system by other workers within the agency. If their clients are having difficulty achieving the use of certain resources, then they become the client group of the advocate. The first step for the advocate is one of intervention. That is, the advocate determines what resource the client wants, then working with the client tries to obtain that resource. Thus the initial step is with the individual, or with a nuclear family, rather than with a community group. The initial intervention works as a method of gaining entree with that individual or family. Advocate activities are particularly well-suited to demonstrating immediate benefits to the client group and serve to some extent, a motivational function in working with the apathetic and the alienated.

Over a period of time, and having encountered many individuals and families, the family advocate is able to move into the area of social policy-making. The writer feels that this is where the real community development process begins. That is, the family advocate is able to make linkages between various individuals and family

groupings who are perhaps experiencing similar problems. This is the organizing function of the community development worker, and it is through this process of organizing that a number of other activities are performed

Firstly, learning situations are created, and the advocate while not initially sharing and communicating many skills, has a good opportunity to do so at this point. While the collectivities of people are defining their problem areas and planning action, they can learn the necessary skills for achieving their objectives, and can hopefully move out of their individual problem areas to look at larger community issues.

Secondly, the motivational aspects of the community development process are carried on continually by the family advocate, and after a few initial small successes by the client group, they could continue on their own initiative.

Thirdly, as in community development, leadership develops, seemingly quite naturally. Although the writer did not personally experience problems in helping to develop followership that problem may well exist for other family advocates.

Within the practice of family advocacy the phase-out period also occurs, either physically by the advocate leaving the agency as happened with the writer, or by the withdrawing of support and interventions

gradually. Over a period of time it will become clear that the client groups are well able to function on their own. Unfortunately, this withdrawal may not be clear to the client in the initial stages of the advocacy project, but it should be. Typically, however, the family advocate is responded to in much the same way that the caseworker at the agency is responded to.

Summary

It is seen then that commonalities exist between community development and family advocacy, in terms of the goals, the client group, and the process utilized by both. One significant difference between community development and family advocacy is at the point of entree into the community. The community development worker may enter at any level, while the family advocate intervenes at the level of family crisis. As well, the advocate initially works with individuals, rather than with members of a group. Beyond the initial point of entree, however, the action process is similar.

While this discussion has been largely theoretical, and somewhat isolated from reality, the case histories which follow immediately in Chapter Five, offer a more precise description of the actual practice of family advocacy within an agency.

FOOTNOTES

¹C. A. S. Hynam, "Community Development, An Example of Conceptual Confusion," in Perspectives on Regions and Regionalism, ed. by B. Y. Card (Edmonton: University of Alberta Printing Services, 1968), pp. 193-199.

²Ibid., p. 196.

³Ibid., p. 196.

⁴F. J. Bregha, "Community Development in Canada, Problems and Strategies," Community Development Journal, V (January, 1970), 4.

⁵Ibid., p. 5.

⁶G. Myrdal, Beyond the Welfare State (New York: Bantam Books, 1967), p. 48.

⁷D. Popenoe, "Community Development and Community Planning," Journal of the American Institute of Planners, XXXIII (July, 1967), 39.

⁸Community Development in Alberta (Ottawa: Special Planning Secretariat, Privy Council Office, 1965), p. 2.

⁹J. Whitford, Toward a More Restricted Definition of Community Development, The Pas, Manitoba, 1970, p. 10. (Mimeoographed.)

¹⁰Ibid., pp. 11-17.

¹¹D. Catmur, as quoted by C. A. S. Hynam, op. cit., p. 198.

¹²C. A. S. Hynam, ibid., p. 197.

¹³C. Taylor, as quoted in Hynam, op. cit., p. 195.

CHAPTER V

CASE HISTORIES

Introduction

One of the clearest ways to understand the practice of family advocacy would be through a look at some selected case histories from the Family Service Association of Edmonton. The writer worked with a core of twenty-five families and individuals and branched out to work with additional families over a four month period. Four months is a very short period of time and while many interventions were carried out, and a good deal of social animation occurred, very little in the way of moving beyond individual problems into the larger community concerns occurred. To the extent that some very pressing concerns on the part of low-income families emerged in discussions over the summer, some action at the larger community level was taken, and some few items have been chosen by workers at the Family Service Association of Edmonton for further pursuit. For example, work is continuing on making available a twenty-four hour crisis and intervention telephone service, negotiations for improved debtor's assistance legislation are still being carried out, and work continues with regard to increased inter-agency cooperation and joint services

delivery.

The Low-Income Profile of Twenty-five Families

As part of my employment at the Family Service Association during the summer of 1970, I* was asked to attempt to gather some data about the low-income families using the agency's services. It will provide an introduction to the case histories, offering a picture of the twenty-five Edmonton families with whom I worked. A copy of the interview format is found in the Appendix.

1. Age, Education and Income

A. Mean Age of Household Head:

n = 8 Where head of household is male,
mean age = 40.6 years

n = 17 Where head of household is female,
mean age = 36.5 years

B. Mean Level of Education of Household Head:

n = 8 Male head of household, level of
education = 9.5 years

n = 17 Female head of household, level of
education = 10.3 years

C. n = 8 Male head of household, income per month per person = \$78.37

*Because the case histories are the personal and experiential part of this thesis, the writer has decided to drop the "editorial we" for this section of case histories only.

n = 17 Female head of household, income per month
per person = \$69.41

D. Mean Income per month per person Using Source of
Income as Factor²:

n = 25

Social Assistance--\$73.50 plus medical expenses

No Social Assistance--\$70.75.

It is interesting to note in this breakdown, that 17 out of the 25 families analyzed had female heads of households. While the females were slightly better educated, they still received slightly less income per person. Perhaps the most interesting breakdown is that of income with the source as the factor. Put simply, welfare recipients in this city and province are better off not to work at the minimum wage because they gain more income plus having their medical expenses paid than if they either worked or received an income supplement. This does not act as any incentive for people with borderline incomes, although nearly all the welfare recipients I spoke with sincerely desired to be off welfare and to be self-supporting, in keeping with other data offered earlier.

2. Breakdown of Spending as to
Family Size

According to the Economic Council of Canada Fifth Annual Review,³ a family spending more than sixty per cent of their total income on food, clothing and shelter would

fall under the Council's definition of poverty. In order to determine how money was spent among the twenty-five core families in the survey, family spending data was gathered (see Table 4).

Table 4 indicates that the largest expenditures are in the areas of food, housing and utilities. Low amounts of money are expended in the areas of clothing and entertainment. As well, only three families were able to save any money. The debt repayment for many of the families take a large percentage of their income each month, leaving little for leisure and entertainment activities. Fortunately, for many families, medical expenses are covered. In looking at the family size and the amount of money spent on food, it must be assumed that the nutritional level of many families is unbalanced and inadequate.

3. Participation in Community Resources

This section of the profile was aimed at getting some measure of the awareness of and participation in existing community resources on the part of low-income families in Edmonton. Indirectly it is a measure of alienation and powerlessness of low-income families to the extent that it offers some idea of inclination to use, and lack of awareness of resources that offer assistance other than financial to low-income families. The low use of helping agencies other than the Family Service

Table 4
BREAKDOWN OF SPENDING BY FAMILY SIZE

Table 4--Continued

	FAMILY SIZE	Housing	Clothing	Medical	Transport	Entertainment	Utilities	FEES	Debt Repayment	Savings
20.	5	\$125	\$130	\$ 30	\$25	\$L.O.	\$40	\$ 4	\$169	\$..
21.	5	155	70	30	4	L.O.	25	..	33	
22.	2	123	40	10	..	3	11	..	10	
23.	4	95	175	20	..	10	30	
24.	5	174	120	50	..	15	9	2	25	
25.	4	130	79	30	20	

L.O. = in these categories whatever is left over gets spent.

Association may indicate a lack of awareness on the part of the families, or may indicate that other helping agencies were not very helpful.

The question was asked "How many times per month do you use . . ." and the answers were as follows. Of twenty-five families surveyed, three used Parks and Recreation courses, eight used public sports facilities, seven used Legal Aid, five used Community Leagues, seven used churches, thirteen used libraries and museums, three used special medical facilities, two used counselling agencies other than the Family Service Association of Edmonton, four used clubs, and two used playschools.

Most of these community resources are inexpensive to use, and yet the user rate is very low. This may indicate a lack of awareness of available resources, a lack of interest in using them, or an inability to know how to use the resources.

In trying to determine why some of the community resources in Edmonton were not being used it became evident that there were financial and transportation barriers to using some facilities. For families living on social assistance allowances there is no provision for bus tickets, or for entertainment purposes. If money is required for these it must be taken from the already very limited food, clothing and shelter budgets.

4. Problems Associated with
Having a Low-Income as
Stated by Clients

Among other problems associated with low incomes were such issues as a lack of money adding additional stress to an already distressed family, a high anxiety level created by waiting for the next welfare cheque, depression, frustration and fear attached to mounting bills, inadequate housing requiring children and parents to share bedrooms, little understanding of consumer or legal rights, a low nutrition level, and outstanding among these severe social pressure against the poor both in the schools and by the public. However, the comments of some of these families in relation to the above are much more colourful and revealing. The following are direct quotations:⁴

Welfare works to keep me on welfare. There's no money to help my kids pursue music and stuff like that outside school.

There's no support for bettering yourself. What kind of encouragement is there in earning no more than \$25.00 per month.⁵

No money for community activities or for family activities or even a vacation together.

A telephone is not considered a necessity so paying for it comes from other parts of the budget.⁶

No money is provided for extras at Christmas or birthdays.

Housing is hard to find in a reasonable district and the rents are high if the landlord knows the Department [of Social Development] is paying the bill.

It [welfare] makes crooks out of people. You have to earn more.

Lousy--I have to buy my kids' clothes at the Goodwill Store.

The Department won't repair my washer and dryer--too fancy for someone on welfare, but they'll get me one of these wringer things.

These comments indicate that problems exist and many families were unaware of avenues that might change the situation.

5. Self-Perception of the Future

In talking about future expectations, sixteen people out of twenty-five expected to be on welfare for at least another year, while only eight expected to be on welfare in the low-income category within the next five years. Sixteen felt the situation could be changed, and of those all but one were willing to participate actively in changing the situation by returning to school if they could, or using other means. For many, it meant trying to make arrangements to have children cared for so that the head of the household could seek education or find employment.⁷

The Families

The following case histories will demonstrate the two-pronged approach of Family Advocacy, intervention and policy-making, as practiced in the Family Service Association of Edmonton, during the summer of 1970. The information found in these case histories was gathered through on-going contacts with families either in their homes or in the advocacy office. The Family Service Association provided a separate office in their facilities and also secretarial

help for typing and telephone answering. In the case of the Peoples' Action Centre, the information comes from a record I kept of the proceedings. Because I was advised by the Chief of Services of the agency that note-taking during meetings with families and individuals made clients feel uncomfortable, I devised a profile sheet (Appendix) which was used immediately following meetings for recording relevant information. The same sheet was used for all twenty-five families. While the case histories cannot be labelled success stories, it is hoped that they will demonstrate advocacy as a merit-worthy approach in working with low-income families.

1. The K. Family

Family Profile

The K. family consists of six children and a mother as head of the household. The youngest child is seven years old and the oldest is twenty-three. All are at home. The living conditions of this family can only be described as appalling, as their two-storied home is without a foundation, has a drainage system allowing seepage of dirt and water into the house, and few windows which means the children must sleep in their outside clothing during the winter months. Exposed wires in the kitchen are a safety hazard, and the stove recently converted from wood-burning to gas is not adequately safe. The garage at the back of the yard is slightly lower than the level of the back lane, resulting in a flood of debris into the garage during summer storms. Part of the

yard is used for a garden, the rest is used to house chickens.

Presenting problems to
the agency

Mrs. K. has been known to the agency since 1965 when she came seeking assistance in her relationships with her children and with some desire to change some of her own behaviour patterns. Since 1965, Mrs. K. has sought assistance for a number of other problems, relating to her financial situation, and her unsuccessful use of community resources.

One issue involved the treatment of her children by the staff and students of the neighbourhood school. After trying to get some action, Mrs. K. removed her children from the school, and was subsequently charged with contravention of the School Act, and sent to Family Court. With the assistance of a counsellor from the Family Service Association, she was able to retain custody of the children, despite the objections of the caseworker from the Department of Social Development. This incident was the start of Mrs. K.'s ongoing feud with the Department of Social Development.

Mrs. K.'s next dispute with a public authority involved the Public Trustee. Some years ago Mrs. K.'s common-law husband died intestate. A common-law wife at that time had no claims on the estate of a deceased common-law husband. Therefore, the Public Trustee sold Mr. K.'s property and set up a trust fund for the children. Since then Mrs. K. has been trying to claim back the

property which was sold, claiming that it is legally hers. No amount of discussion can persuade her otherwise.

Since the death of Mr. K., Mrs. K. and her family have been supported by the Department of Social Development, and have remained in their home, described earlier. She has been trying, without success, to have the house repaired, but three independent contractors have stated that the repairs would cost far more than the value of the house, and therefore the Department is not willing to pay for the repairs. However, they will find Mrs. K. suitable housing elsewhere and give her the opportunity to buy that house from the sale of the present one. As it is the only property she owns, and she feels strongly about being cheated by public authorities, she cannot trust the Department of Social Development, and has refused to move, all the while phoning the Department continually, besieging the Deputy Minister of Social Development, etc.

The dispute which originally involved the Advocacy Project was regarding Mrs. K.'s negotiations with the City Engineers. During a summer storm a great deal of mud and debris had been swept into Mrs. K.'s garage, and she wanted the Engineers to clean it out. They were prepared to grade the lane so that it would not happen again, but they refused to clean the garage. Mrs. K. contacted the advocacy office demanding a ride to City Hall to protest this decision, having already spoken to some

thirteen people, including the mayor.

Before explaining the action taken by the Advocacy Project, it should be noted that Mrs. K. has been diagnosed by the agency psychiatrist as a "classical hysterical-neurotic." This may explain in part her behaviour with the agency. She has been inclined to stick with one worker until she was on the verge of needing to take action on her own behalf, and then the counselling relationship would be terminated by Mrs. K., with the charge that the counsellor could not or would not help her. Reading through the case file, it became apparent that generally her demands concerned unrealistic complaints against various government departments, and were demands that were impossible to meet.

Action taken by the Advocacy Project

My first encounter in 1970 with Mrs. K. concerned the state of her garage and her concern that she would be plagued by worms if the Engineers would not clean out her garage. Negotiations and interventions with the Engineers came to no avail, but I spent many hours sorting through her complaints against the Public Trustee and the Department of Social Development. The Public Trustee had functioned quite within his capacity, but Mrs. K. would not believe this.

The issue of house repairs was shared by many of the low-income families with whom I worked. The Department

of Social Development will typically not help families on assistance with these types of repairs. However, after several case conferences they did agree to purchase a new house for the family, and back the mortgage. Mrs. K. was certain that if she sold her house then the Department of Social Development would put a caveat on it, thus retrieving all the money they had spent in assistance for the family. No amount of persuasion, even showing the statutes to Mrs. K. would persuade her. The situation was left that the Family Service Association would assist the family in relocation and counselling if she changed her mind.

At only one point was I successful in meeting her demands. Mrs. K. was charged with assault by the City Police when she discovered that a neighbour was trying to get rid of Mrs. K.'s chickens, by opening the coop door in the middle of the night. Mrs. K. went over to the neighbour brandishing the kitchen knife. The police, when the situation was described to them, did not press charges, but only issued a warning to Mrs. K.

Termination of the case

While lack of money adds an additional stress to this family, Mrs. K. knows where to seek action concerning her needs. However, she still exhibits a special kind of powerlessness. "Everytime I want help, someone pushes me down," and "I'll have to go to some meetings and get some action," were her frequent comments. Although many people

were sympathetic towards Mrs. K. her demands were unrealistic and impossible to meet. Her cyclical periods of hostility and suspiciousness meant that it was difficult to establish any sort of ongoing relationship with her, and that the trust level was minimal. Whenever she was on the verge of finding a solution she would step back and attack another issue.

When I left the Advocacy Project some months later Mrs. K. retained a contact with another worker, and it would appear that the situation has virtually repeated itself, with no solution in sight.

2. The B. Family

Family profile

Mr. and Mrs. B. are very young parents of a seven month old baby girl, who suffers from lung congestion verging on pneumonia. Mr. B. was at the time they came to the agency, an unemployed barber, having been just accused by his former employer of stealing money from the shop. In addition, they were carrying a series of debts totalling \$225.00.

Presenting problems to the agency

My first contact with this family was through a phone call from Mrs. B.'s mother who wanted information concerning tenant-landlord legislation for her daughter. Having given her this information, she asked if I would

phone her daughter because Mrs. B.'s basement was flooded and the couple had just found all sorts of insects in the cupboards and in the cereal.

There was no answer when I called, but within the hour Mrs. B. was in my office with the baby, and with a jar full of worms that she had found in the cupboard. Without any delay, I suggested that Mrs. B. phone the Health Department which she did from my office. Within four hours, the Health Department had inspected and closed the house, finding open drains, a number of insects, weeping walls and an illegal furnace. They wired the owner charging her with renting a suite in that condition.

Action taken by the Advocacy Project

The B. Family, as a result of this action, were faced with two very immediate problems--finding new accommodation and finding the necessary damage deposit. A small loan of \$150.00 was obtained from the Family Service Association emergency loan fund with the understanding that this would be paid back when Mr. B. received his damage deposit from the first landlady.

Having moved, and still being without a job, Mr. B. phoned me to say they were without food and were concerned about milk for the baby. They had decided to apply for social assistance from the City Social Services Department but were unable to get an appointment for two

days. In the meantime, they received a food voucher from the Salvation Army.

When Mr. B. went down to apply for assistance, he was told to return two days later and bring his wife. Being without money, they had to walk a distance of four miles. I telephoned the intake worker to request for some better service for this family and was told that the Department was in no hurry. The worker stated that she had discovered that this family had applied for assistance some months previously stating that they were married and that Mrs. B. was pregnant. In fact they were married several days after applying for assistance. I thought this a rather poor reason for refusing assistance but had no luck in speeding up the proceedings.

Termination of the case

Mr. B. is now attending a special Manpower training course and working part-time as a barber. In the evenings Mrs. B. works at a drive-in restaurant, and slowly they are paying off their debts. They were finally able to get back their original damage deposit through the action of the Small Debts Court.

This family is a classic example of powerlessness caused, at least in part, by a lack of information regarding available resources in the community. Having received the appropriate information from myself during the Advocacy Project, they were able to take advantage of the services

offered by the Small Debts Court, and by the special Manpower services.

3. The S. Family

Family profile

Mrs. S. and her four boys ranging in age from sixteen to six, live in low-cost housing in the north end of Edmonton. Their total income is \$358.00 per month from social assistance. Mrs. S. is involved in a special project with the Department of Social Development, and has been encouraged to return to school to complete her matriculation and then enter university.

Presenting problems to the agency

Mrs. S. first came to the agency in the spring of 1968 concerned about the behaviour patterns of her eldest son after the divorce action between herself and her husband. As this issue began to be worked out, Mrs. S. developed some concerns over summer activities for her children as she would be continuing to attend classes during the summer. As well, she expressed concerns over her own growth, and her inability to meet people other than social assistance recipients.

Action taken by the Advocacy Project

Mrs. S., under the special Department of Social Development project, was receiving money for tuition and

extra clothing, but no assistance for day-care for the children while she was attending classes. They were unable to budget any extra money for day camps, or transportation costs for the children during the summer.

As per the agreement in the divorce action, the oldest son was to spend the summer with his father in another province, and the second oldest got employment through the Youth Employment Service which operated in Edmonton during the summer of 1970. The two youngest boys went off to the Y.M.C.A. camp* at greatly reduced cost.

From Mrs. S.'s point of view, living in low-cost housing had the disadvantage of being in her terms "in-grown." Although she was busy with studying, she still felt anxious to be involved with people who were intellectually stimulating, and socially wanted to be more active than sitting on her porch drinking beer in the evenings with the rest of the residents of the area. She and I spent many mornings just talking over coffee in her kitchen discussing what she wanted to do with her life, what things she felt needed to be done in this society, and what she felt was possible outside the academic area.

Eventually Mrs. S. got other women from the housing area involved in these morning coffee talks, and

*The Y.M.C.A. and Y.W.C.A. take the children of social assistance families to their camps each summer. The family need only apply, and the Y.M.C.A.-Y.W.C.A. and the Department of Social Development share the cost.

the discussion would range over a wide variety of topics. Many of the women were unaware of the resources available to them in Edmonton, both recreational and legal, and together they researched and gathered a good deal of information. Many other children got involved in the Y.M.C.A.-Y.W.C.A. camping program.

All the women were concerned with the poor conditions of the local tot lot and they organized a project to clear out all the broken glass and make the area more safe for little children. As the parks and recreation employee at the tot lot was unable to get anything going for the children, these mothers offered their help on a regular basis as volunteers. During the Senate Committee on Poverty hearings in Edmonton, several of the women were part of a presentation regarding the problems of social assistance and low-income.

Termination of the case

I have no knowledge of any of the other women in the housing area, but Mrs. S. finished her course work this winter and is attending N.A.I.T. this coming fall. Although the oldest son experienced problems when he returned home, he and the other boys completed another year at school.

4. Miss C.

Family Profile

Miss C. is an Eskimo girl, twenty-one years of age,

living in a boarding house in Edmonton while attending a nurses' aide course under Canada Manpower. Her home is in the Yukon Territories and she hopes to return there at the termination of her course. Her income is solely the student grant paid under the Manpower retraining program. When I first met Miss C. she had not received any of this income as the course had not yet started.

Presenting problems to the agency

Miss C.'s landlady phoned one Friday afternoon asking for assistance for Miss C. who was quite ill and had nothing to eat for several days. The landlady had made several phone calls before contacting the advocacy office but could get no medical attention for this young woman. Having phoned the Crisis Unit operated by the Department of Social Development, the landlady was referred to a caseworker there as the Crisis Unit operated only after 4:30 p.m. The caseworker stated that the Department of Social Development could offer no assistance because Miss C. was Eskimo and therefore under federal jurisdiction. Eleven different phone calls to the Department of Northern Affairs personnel also came to nothing.

Action taken by the Advocacy Project

I confirmed the landlady's phone call with the Department of Social Development and was given the same information that I should contact the federal Department

of Northern Affairs. As it was then 4:30 p.m. and the office was closed, I again contacted the Crisis Unit. The night supervisor again referred me to the federal department. When I told him that their office was closed, he sighed and said that the girl probably was not ill enough to warrant emergency treatment and I could phone the federal department the following Monday.

This last comment angered me sufficiently to threaten the supervisor by telling him I would expose the Crisis Unit to the press if he did not have an ambulance to pick up Miss C. immediately. Within twelve minutes she was taken to the Charles Camsell Hospital, remaining there for three weeks with pneumonia and a severe case of malnutrition. She was then released to the care of her landlady who received some assistance from the Department of Northern Affairs.

Termination of the case

Miss C.'s landlady and I went to see the Manpower people concerned with this program and suggested that they ensure that students have enough money to live on prior to receiving their first living allowance. As well, the landlady made a personal representation to the Deputy Minister of the Department of Social Development and explained the situation to him. I talked with many people in Edmonton about the Crisis Unit's ineffectiveness, and there is now a movement in the city on the part of several

cooperating agencies to set up a twenty-four hour a day service offering assistance and information. This would include doing follow-up to ensure that people are getting the services they need. Hopefully this new service will be free to operate across political jurisdictions.

5. The R. Family

Family profile

Mr. and Mrs. R. are a young couple who look much older than their years. They and their four children have a total monthly income of \$376.00 which comes from the Department of Social Development and the Unemployment Insurance Commission.

Presenting problems to the agency

Mrs. R., without the permission of her husband, came to the agency seeking marriage counselling and support in her decision to leave her husband. Financial concerns were the principal cause of this decision as Mr. R. had signing authority for all cheques coming into the household, and Mrs. R. was unable to pay the rent or buy food. She was also terribly concerned about the general health of her children and her inability to pay for health care for them. Because they were only on the income supplement plan of the Department of Social Development, their health costs were not totally covered.

Action taken by the Advocacy Project

As Mrs. R. had already taken steps to get legal aid assistance in her divorce action, she suggested that the immediate problems were ones of dental and eye care for her children. Because she planned to move at the end of the school term, housing was also a pressing problem. She was under physical threat from her husband so that all moving plans and finding money for a damage deposit had to be accomplished without his knowledge.

The school nurse was approached and offered to set up dental appointments for the children through the Local Board of Health. The Department of Social Development was, after several requests, persuaded to pay the necessary drug bills and ophthalmologist fees. However, because Mrs. R. was not the head of the household, the Department would not offer assistance in the matter of housing.

For many afternoons in succession, Mrs. R., her youngest baby and myself would go house-hunting, having purchased the Edmonton Journal and marked all the possibilities. Generally, the houses were terribly expensive relative to what they offered, but eventually something suitable was found, the damage deposit and first month's rent were taken care of.

Fortunately for Mrs. R., she located a house outside the jurisdictional area of the local Department of Social Development office in which she had lived previously

and was able then, to get a new worker who was much more cooperative, much more willing to give Mrs. R. her full benefits as a social assistance recipient. This is perhaps one of the unspoken tragedies of being a social assistance recipient--that is, so much depends on the worker who can either be helpful, or set up all sorts of barriers. Whenever I was helping to find houses for the families who were part of the Advocacy Project, I always suggested that they move into the jurisdictional area that was the most helpful.

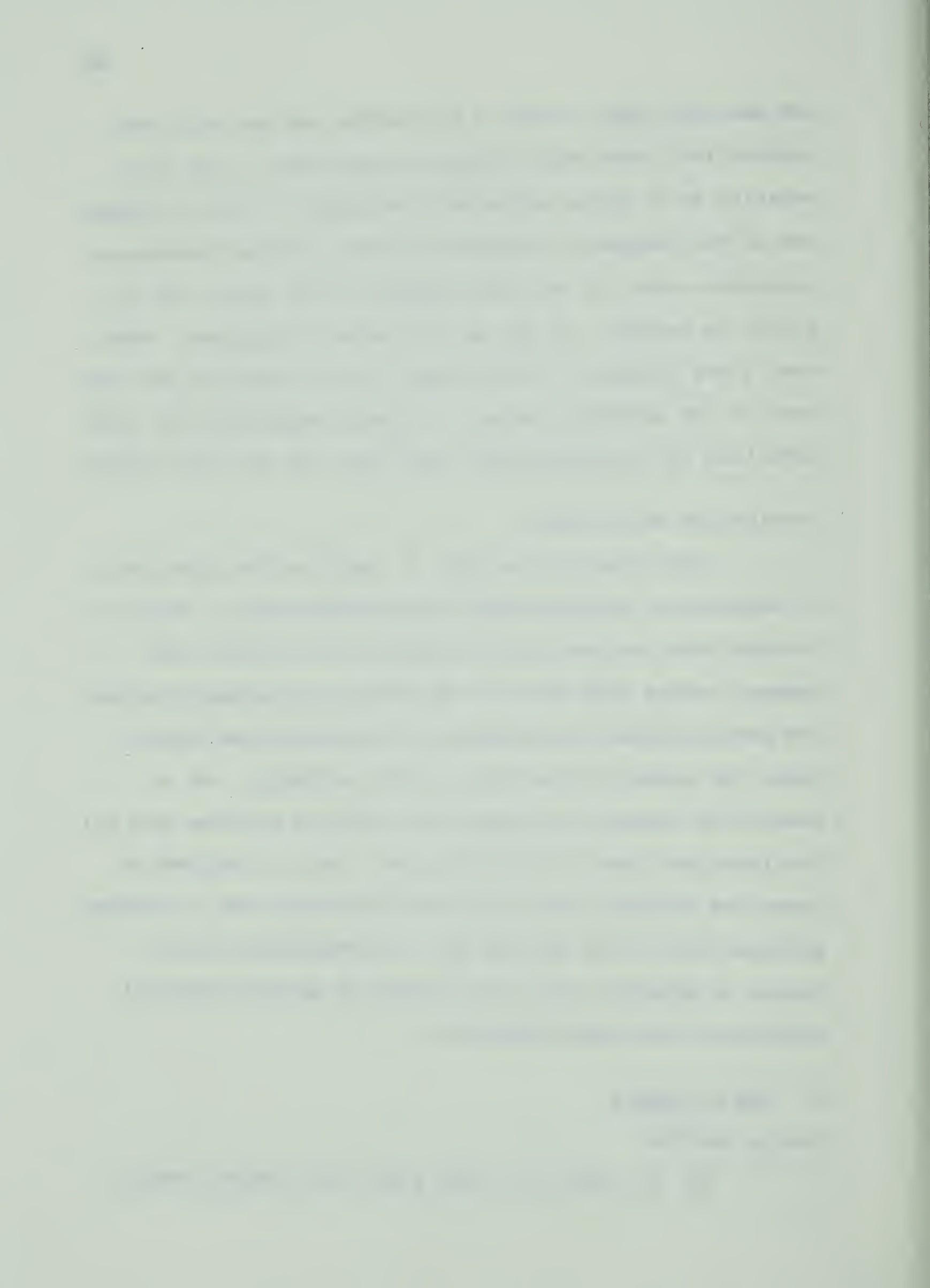
Termination of the case

From time to time Mrs. R. would suffer from bouts of depression, and her health would deteriorate. While I thought she was getting some sparkle back during the summer, having made most of the moving arrangements herself and having helped the children in obtaining some health care, the ending of the story is not as happy. Mr. R. eventually located his family and took the children and all the furniture back to the old house. Mrs. R. decided to leave the children with her husband and went off to another province with a man she had met. Subsequently on her return to Edmonton, she was admitted to Alberta Hospital suffering from acute depression.

6. The M. Family

Family profile

Mr. M. works in a meat plant and grosses \$448.00



per month. To supplement the family income, Mrs. M. works during the evenings. They have a family of five children ranging in age from ten years to two years. The second youngest child has a serious speech impediment and is possibly mentally retarded.

Presenting problems to the agency

The Family Service originally came in contact with this family through a request from the area public health nurse. She was particularly concerned with the nutritional level of the children and the existence of lice in their hair. The nurse suggested that a homemaker provided by the agency might be able to assist in these two matters, as well as performing an educative role with Mrs. M. around the neglected emotional needs of the children.

The homemaker referred the family to the Advocacy Project for legal assistance regarding the house they had purchased for \$13,000. Because of immediate medical bills, they were unable to keep up the house payments and were being threatened with court action by the owner of the house. Having just moved into the house they became aware of its poor condition, faulty and hazardous wiring, a leaking roof, and plumbing on the verge of collapse. Any house repairs would add too much to their already heavy debt load.

Action taken by the Advocacy Project

Mr. and Mrs. M. decided to sell the house, and in

the meantime I suggested they use the services of Legal Aid to avoid the impending court case, and to use the Debtor's Assistance Board to consolidate their debts. As well, they applied for low-cost housing and with some discussion, the City Housing Office agreed to put them on the short list because they were on the verge of selling their home.

The public health nurse in the area agreed to continue her visits and help Mrs. M. with the special speech exercises that their daughter required. Although Mrs. M. was not amenable to receiving help from a full-time homemaker, she did want to meet some of the women in the neighbourhood. This was arranged through some women in the area who had been former clients of the agency. They were on the verge of setting up a cooperative babysitting service when the Advocacy Project ended.

Termination of the case

With the end of the Advocacy Project came a termination of this family's relationship with the agency, and no follow-up has been done.

7. The D. Family

Family profile

This family is a prime example of a family whose emotional problems are severely aggravated by financial ones. Mr. and Mrs. D. are a middle aged couple with five children ranging in age from fourteen years to five years,

the first child coming when Mrs. D. was thirty-three. Mr. D. has a take-home pay of \$389.00 per month, and works as a day-labourer with the City. Even after four years of employment with them he is considered a temporary worker and thus cannot qualify for their pension plan, or the reduced Medicare rates.

Presenting problem to
the agency

Mrs. D., accompanied by her eldest daughter came to the agency seeking help for the daughter who had been skipping school, and seemed very unhappy with the home situation and her relationship with her father. After several interviews, the counsellor who saw them suggested that Mrs. D. use the services of the advocacy project and the counsellor would continue seeing the daughter.

Mrs. D. was concerned with a whole set of problems that she associated with their low income. The children had social problems because they were unable to dress well or get sports equipment for the Little League teams in the neighbourhood. She was personally concerned with her own health and certainly her appearance suggested that she was not well. There would be no chance for a summer vacation for the family, and she had just received notices from the school that several of the children needed eye care and dental work. As well, there was always the chance that her husband would be laid off again. As she looked

into the future, she could only see the same problems of no money and found this to be an ongoing and quite depressing experience for her. She never leaves the home for any outside activity either. Like many of the low-income families who were a part of the Advocacy Project, the money worries quickly led to a state of depression which meant that Mrs. D., like many other women, just could not move to seek help for herself and needed much support and quiet encouragement.

Action taken by the Advocacy Project

I frequently visited Mrs. D. and we would spend many hours chatting over a cup of coffee. The immediate medical problems being experienced by the children were taken care of by the Local Board of Health. I encouraged Mrs. D. to speak to the school nurse explaining the financial problems of the family, which she did, and then the Local Board of Health was happy to see to the necessary eye and dental care. The school nurse also put Mrs. D. in touch with some other neighbourhood women who also were lonely and met over coffee on a regular basis. This gave Mrs. D. at least a small social outlet.

Her concern about not being able to participate in the city employees' health plan was taken care of by one phone call. However, no pension arrangements could be worked out because of the temporary employment status of

her husband. We also together checked into the possibility of an income supplement for the family through the Department of Social Development, but because they had a borderline income they were not able to get this assistance.

It was around summer plans that Mrs. D. taught me a valuable lesson. Because there was no money for a holiday for the family I suggested a number of possibilities including family camps operated by several local churches. I even helped Mrs. D. fill out the application forms. In the end, the family decided to stay at home and work in the garden. It does not pay to push families into some pre-established plan set by the advocate, or to offer too much unasked for assistance. As Mrs. D. put it, "You tell me in your actions that I can't do anything myself." It was a lesson well-learned and very helpful.

Termination of the case

When the Advocacy Project ended, no further follow-up with the family was done. The counselling relationship with the eldest daughter had been terminated at her request earlier in the summer.

8. The Y. Family

Family profile

Mrs. Y. supports her four children, the oldest of whom is retarded and at home only during vacations, on



\$292.00 per month from the Department of Social Development. She rents her home from her brother who lives in the basement when he is in Edmonton.

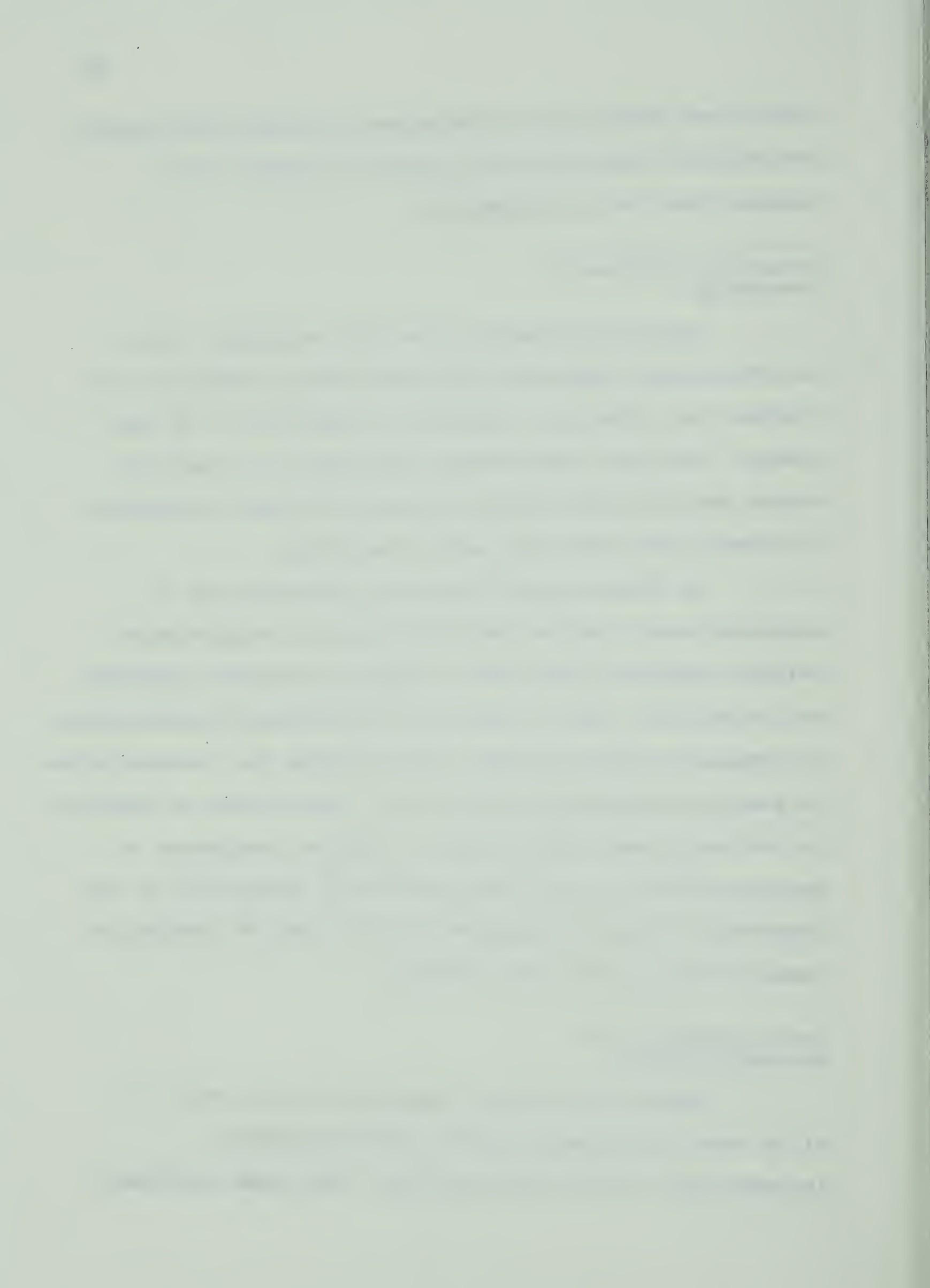
Presenting problems to the agency

Increasing pressure from bill collectors, and a son who was not receiving sufficient medical attention for a severe ear infection, initially brought Mrs. Y. to the agency. She felt, and perhaps justifiably so, that the doctor was not sufficiently concerned with her son because the family were receiving social assistance.

As these matters slowly got resolved, Mrs. Y. expressed some concerns about the plight of single parent welfare recipients--the lack of opportunities for upgrading and retraining, lack of money for the children to participate in Community League programs, lack of money for transportation to downtown recreational facilities, the attitude of teachers in the area toward the children of welfare recipients, a generalized fear of the repercussions of complaining to the Department of Social Development, and a lack of inexpensive summer activities for her children.

Action taken by the Advocacy Project

Through the Debtor's Assistance Board, Mrs. Y.'s bills were consolidated and she made one payment, interest-free, to the court monthly. With some assistance



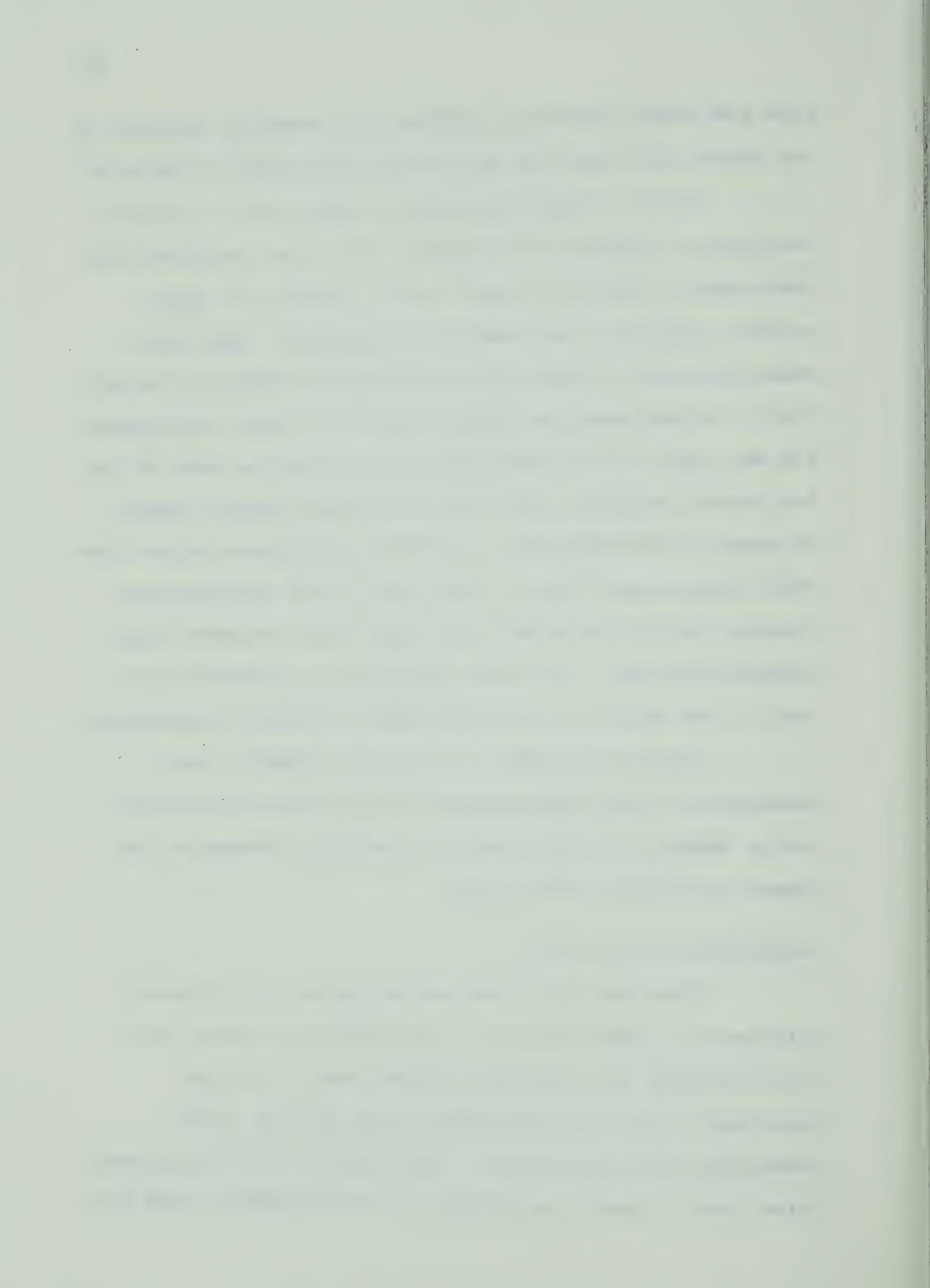
from the school nurse who applied the necessary pressure on the doctor, her son had the ear operation that he required.

Being a gregarious sort of woman, Mrs. Y. had no hesitation in meeting new people, and in her neighbourhood there were a number of women in her position of being welfare recipients and heads of households. All these women were put in touch with the Humans on Welfare Society. Mrs. Y. volunteered her typing skills to them, and because she was such a good home manager she agreed to work on the low-income cookbook, and ended up giving cooking lessons to some of the membership. With the confidence gained from these experiences, Mrs. Y. and some of her neighbourhood friends visited the school principal and discussed their concerns with him. She was also able to talk with less fear to her worker in the Department of Social Development.

During the summer, two of her children took advantage of the camping opportunities with the Y.M.C.A., and in August the whole family joined with others at the Humans on Welfare Family Camp.

Termination of the case

There has only been one occasion for follow-up with Mrs. Y. since the end of the Advocacy Project, and this concerned an accusation against Mrs. Y. by the Department of Social Development that she was living common-law with her brother. This charge was later proved false, but it nearly destroyed all the confidence that Mrs.



Y. had gained through the summer.

9. The P. Family

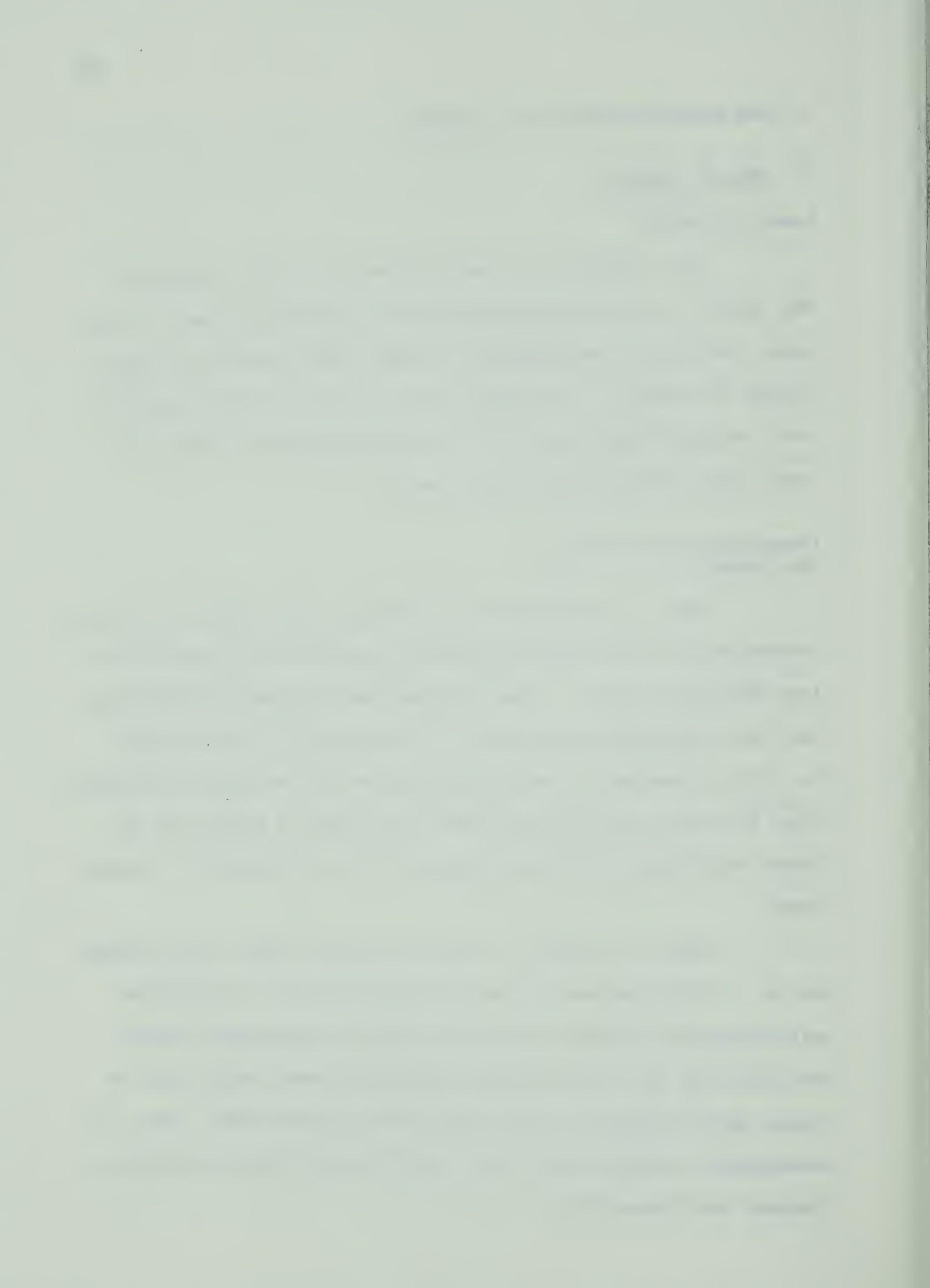
Family profile

Mr. and Mrs. P. have a family of five children who range in age from nine years to one year of age. After their monthly house payment is made, they live on a total income of \$258.00. Because they live in a commuting town just outside Edmonton, Mr. P.'s transportation costs to work take another \$40.00 per month.

Presenting problems to the agency

Mrs. P. telephoned the agency, and after an initial conversation with the switchboard operator was referred to the Advocacy office. She had that morning been fired from her job and wished assistance in finding out the reasons for this dismissal. Her conversation on the phone indicated that she was severely disturbed, and when I asked her if there was anyone with her she said no, and asked if I would come.

When I arrived, a very dirty and naked child asked me in. The house was in an incredible state of disorder with wailing children in every corner, overturned cereal and milk on the table, dirty clothing tossed about with a young child asleep on the top of one of the heaps. Mrs. P. eventually emerged and I can only describe her as having a hunted look about her.



Again she tried to tell me her story. She had apparently been employed as a clearing woman at the local school, and had been dismissed because of her rude manner with the other cleaning staff. Every few sentences she would break from her story to implore me to find out the "real" reason for her having been fired. Her hostility, suspiciousness and loneliness which was to manifest itself in greater depth later in the summer already showed clearly through her beating and flailing fists, the tone of her voice, and the glare in her eyes.

Action taken by the Advocacy Project

I did visit with the principal of the school and the head of the cleaning staff. There was no complaint about the quality of her work, but her behaviour patterns made it impossible for anyone to team with her. The principal was also relieved that Mrs. P. was in touch with someone because he was concerned about the children.

When I returned to see Mrs. P., she was still very upset and I did not want to leave her until her husband arrived home from work. When he arrived he asked what was for dinner and was told potatoes and rock candy. He had given Mrs. P. some money that morning to shop for groceries and this is what she had bought. A call to the local Emergency Homemaker Service brought a homemaker immediately who would stay with the family until some of the problems

were resolved. She arranged to have the family fed down the street at a neighbour's, and I stayed to talk with Mr. P.

He explained that Mrs. P. had been mentally ill before their marriage although Mrs. P.'s father told him it was a physical ailment. Mr. P. realized that his wife needed help but he could not stay home to care for the children. I assured him that the homemaker would stay on during the day until Mrs. P. was well enough to carry on. I contacted her psychiatrist of several years back, and although he was too busy to see her, he prescribed some drugs for her.

During the weeks that followed I made frequent visits to the home, mostly to offer support to the homemaker who was having a difficult time. Many community resources were mobilized including an income supplement for the family, some summer activities for the children, a washer so that the laundry could be done at home. The medication seemed to be helping Mrs. P. who was once again able to speak coherently, and occasionally able to smile. She was taking pride in her housekeeping accomplishments, and was able to go outside on her own without serious anxiety. The situation seemed to be working itself out.

However, late one afternoon I received a call from the homemaker saying that Mrs. P. had gone off the deep end and was threatening the homemaker and the children with

a knife. I contacted Mr. P. at work and together we drove Mrs. P. to the hospital where she was admitted to the psychiatric ward for treatment.

Termination of the case

Mrs. P. was released at the end of a month's treatment and continued at home under the care of the homemaker who had lived in the home while Mrs. P. was in the hospital. Since that time, the family has been offered the use of many community resources at no cost to them, and have had some counselling support from the local White Cross Centre.

10. The Peoples' Action Centre

One of the aspects of the Family Advocacy project which I enjoyed most of all, were the ongoing contacts with voluntary indigenous organizations in the city, and the making of linkages between these organizations and the people with whom I worked directly. While the work was somewhat different than that done with individual families, it was part of the attempts at social change and the development of alternative approaches in working with low-income families. With the emphasis of the past few years on self-help groups, increased citizen participation and involvement in decision-making, the number of voluntary, indigenous organizations has skyrocketed. The people involved in these organizations are very committed to the

goals of the group, very enthusiastic about the work involved, and always open to new contacts and new information. As well, they are achieving action on behalf of their memberships, and achieving this action through an advocacy approach.

Such voluntary organizations share common concerns and problems and frequently a common constituency. While manpower is no problem, these organizations find that financing, office space and secretarial services do present problems. For these reasons, several organizations in the city (The F.U.T.U.R.E. Society, Humans on Welfare, Youth Involvement Program, Unwed Mothers, H.E.L.P., and the Human Rights Association) formulated a plan whereby they might all lease a large building and share cooperative services such as an information centre, an employment office, a day-care centre, a clothing exchange, a credit union, a steno pool, duplicating facilities, meeting space, and a common telephone and reception area. Each organization would have its own separate office space. Fund raising ventures would also be cooperative. The advantages were clear. Firstly, multi-use of such facilities would lower the cost to each participating organization, and secondly, the sharing of ideas and concerns, and the cooperation and liaison that geographical proximity would engender could only benefit joint action and response to human needs in Edmonton.

My own role in all of this was as a facilitator, as the Family Service Association of Edmonton was not interested in getting space in this joint venture. Thus, I served really only to call meetings and facilitate the planning process.

As the idea of the Action Centre grew, members of the voluntary groups began looking for suitable space and decided upon an abandoned Safeway store at the corner of 95 Street and Jasper Avenue. The location was ideal in terms of transportation, parking, and was on the fringe of the city centre close to other resources and to the constituency it hoped to serve. Because the City owned the property negotiations had to be carried out through City Council and the Commission Board.

Because the voluntary groups wanted to move into the building during the fall, and because the City Council was having its last meeting on the 20th of July, time became an important consideration. Group process principles of checking out decisions, and ensuring that everyone felt comfortably involved were forgotten in the rush, and this was to be the beginning of the end of the idea.

The ad hoc committee decided on a fairly unusual organizational plan that established a holding company to manage the building, handle leases, insure custodial requirements, to act as legal representatives, and to supervise building services and personnel. The Management

Council, formed from volunteer representatives of each organization located in the centre would be set up. This council was to be responsible for coordinating activities, deciding on tenants, establishing and controlling shared programs of the tenants within the building, carrying out community relations, and ensuring flexibility.

It was proposed that the City lease the building to the holding company at a nominal yearly fee of one dollar, and that the City would do the necessary \$25,000. renovations. Each tenant of the building would be responsible for furnishings, utility costs, insurance, etc., with the holding company.

Two organizations were suggested as possible holding companies, The Edmonton Social Planning Council, and the City Centre Churches Corporation. A decision was eventually made in favour of the City Centre Churches Corporation, but this decision was not unanimous. However, the committee decided to go ahead anyway and present a brief to City Council. The agenda for that Council meeting was unusually heavy, and the presentation received scant attention and a few terse questions. As was foreseen, the matter was referred to the Commission Board and the committee was asked to send more information to that body.

The brief was eventually withdrawn for several reasons: no consensus could be reached on the selection of the holding company and the organizations who disagreed with

the original decision dropped out, one of the committee members would not agree to a particular organization being accommodated in the proposed Centre, and finally the individual groups could not get back to their constituencies because of the summer holidays.

Under different circumstances and less time pressure, I think the Action Centre could have been achieved. As it was there was not time to reach consensus, or to prepare a good study to present to the City Council. Subsequently, however, several of these groups have banded together and are located in a common area nearer their constituencies.

Conclusion

This chapter offered a picture of the life-styles of the twenty-five families involved in the Advocacy Project and the problems they experienced in their day-to-day existence. The case histories, while revealing the multi-faceted nature of low-income living, demonstrated the two-pronged process of advocacy at the crisis intervention level and at the level of social change and policy-making. This was provided to give the reader an insight into the problems of low-income families, and how advocacy works to alleviate their distress.

FOOTNOTES

¹The total monthly income of each family was drawn evenly among family members and averaged as to the sex of head of household.

²Only those persons on full social assistance allowances receive free medical care.

³Economic Council of Canada, Fifth Annual Review, The Challenge of Growth and Change, (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1968), p. 108.

⁴These quotes are drawn from interviews carried out and recorded by the writer.

⁵Social assistance recipients are allowed to earn extra money to the amount of \$25.00 per month.

⁶The costs of a telephone are included in the social assistance allowances only if necessary for medical reasons, for example, diabetes, heart disease.

⁷As is noted, many of the families are single-parent families with a female head of household. Mothers are encouraged to stay at home even in situations where they could earn high wages in outside employment.

CHAPTER VI

AN EVALUATION OF ADVOCACY AS A COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT TECHNIQUE IN WORKING WITH LOW-INCOME FAMILIES

Introduction

The stated problem of this thesis is to examine, through description and evaluation, the nature of family advocacy as a community development technique in working with low-income families. The first five chapters described family advocacy within two frames of reference--advocacy and community development. While the perspective in part was necessarily historical, the case histories provided a more current and practical perspective. The task of Chapter Six is to complete this examination of family advocacy by providing an evaluation of it.

The evaluation will be presented in two separate sub-sections. The first section will examine the problems inherent in family advocacy as a technique in working with low-income families, while the second section will suggest the benefits of the use of family advocacy. This particular way of organizing the chapter is necessitated by the exigencies of a field work project limited to four months. That period of time was insufficient to practice and thus

examine the two major thrusts of family advocacy, intervention and social policy-making, in a rigorous fashion. Four months was not sufficient time to begin, carry-out and terminate an Advocacy Project and emerge with a complete evaluation of it.

Therefore, the writer feels that it is necessary to evaluate the concept of the practice of family advocacy and to suggest from the field experience, the problems inherent in the approach, especially those problems peculiar to family advocacy as practised within a private agency. It will be up to the reader to weigh for himself the problems inherent in the approach against the benefits derived from using such an approach with low-income families.

The Problems Inherent in the Advocacy Approach

Funding and Support

In his discussion on the goals of community development in Canada, Bregha¹ suggests that the real interest of community development ought to be the equitable allocation of assets and power within our society.

This is what distinguishes community development strategies from more service-oriented strategies. For community development the provision for and the delivery of services is only one and perhaps the least important aspect. Its main thrust and principal raison d'etre as a method of intervention is to transform the causes and conditions shaping the quality of life in a society so that as few people as possible in it would depend on any kind of service.²

While Bregha is speaking of community development, the

comments apply to family advocacy as well. Given the reallocation of assets and power as one of the goals of advocacy, the choice of appropriate tactics used in achieving these goals presents problems in the area of funding and support.

In our complex society it has become necessary for participants to learn new ways of achieving personal and group goals. The use of advocacy tactics, as perhaps a new way of achieving these goals, means that the advocate may have to contend with increasing antagonism from various social agencies and governmental departments. It may mean being considered in the world of social agencies as a disturbing influence. As Galbraith pointed out in his examination of western society:

These are the days when men of all social disciplines and all political faiths seek the comfortable and the accepted; when the man of controversy is looked upon as a disturbing influence; when originality is taken to be a mark of instability; and when, in minor modification of the scriptural parable, the bland lead the bland.³

Not only does the use of advocacy techniques disturb both the employing agency and outside agencies, but there is always the question for both the advocate and the community development worker as to whether priorities rest with the client group or with the funding body. Piven, while being a supporter of advocacy raises this question. She notes⁴ that two elements are essential to the concept of

advocacy: professional services must be made available to the poor, and these services should be structured to assure that the professional is responsive to the interests of the poor as the poor themselves see them. However, she asks, if professional services are in the end responsive to whoever finances them, where can the poor find the money to pay their advocates?

The usual funding agencies such as United Community Funds are reluctant to support indigenous change movements fearing that the threat they pose to the donor public may cause donations to drop:

Bureaucracy, as the instrument of power, can be taken to reflect the interests of the dominant social classes. The apparent irrelevance of social services, judged by the needs of the poor, could have a harsher explanation than the devotion to ritual of organization men. It may suit the needs of the middle classes, whose well-being would be threatened by more generous and effective service to the poor . . . Contributors to the United Fund may not wish to see voluntary agencies deploy their services only to those who cannot afford to support them any more than agency staff may enjoy working with clients of so little status.⁵

Resources other than funding are also difficult to obtain when the supplier of services may well become the target of the client group in its attempts for change at the societal level.

What is laid out for the poor when their advocate arrives is a strategy of political participation which, to be effective, requires powerful group support, stable organization, professional staff and money--precisely those resources which the poor do not have.⁶

While the advocate seeks some of these resources within his employing agency or host community, the financial position of that agency or community is often a consideration. The Family Service Association of Edmonton is largely supported by the United Community Fund of Greater Edmonton and the City Social Services Department. Thus the agency may be reluctant to offer support to a group which might become the adversary of those two bodies.

For example, the writer wished to lodge a formal complaint against the City Social Service Department regarding the experiences encountered there by the B. family. The decision not to lodge the complaint was made by the advocate because the agency was in negotiation with the City Social Service Department regarding funding for a new project. While this sort of trade-off situation may be deplored, it is a real situation that must be taken into account.

Direct Intervention or Mobilization of Clients

The advocate is generally faced with two choices. He may directly intercede on behalf of the client or he may mobilize the client to work for himself. It is possible to emasculate the client by being overly protective, or to abdicate one's responsibility and leave the client to fend for himself against powerful adversaries. Both choices have attendant problems.

If the advocate chooses to intercede on behalf of the client two problems are likely to occur. Firstly, this serves to say indirectly to the client that he is not able to solve his own problems, and secondly, the advocate loses any opportunity to function in a fully educational role. This means that when the next crisis arises, the client is still dependent on the advocate.

On the other hand, if the advocate encourages the client to become involved, to use his own skills, to work towards achieving his felt needs, then the advocate must try to ensure that the involvement is going to be accepted as legitimate. If it is going to broaden the base of decision-making, and be used for the purpose of policy-making and program development, then it will be a useful experience for the client group. Token participation can only be a depressing experience for the poor, and may serve only to stabilize a system sadly in need of change. It may also increase the clients' hostility toward the organization.

For example, The Humans on Welfare Society negotiated very strongly to obtain two or three seats on the Department of Social Development's Welfare Appeal Board. In the end, they received one seat on a board of twelve persons, some of whom were "professionally-trained" volunteers and Department employees. Even if that one board member is immensely articulate, she will not likely affect many of the decisions of that body.

Bias and Lack of Information

The third problem area inherent in the advocacy approach, and one encountered by the author far too frequently, is the problem of bias and lack of information. The advocate's primary responsibility is to his client, to champion his cause if it is a worthy one, to advise his client, to fight for his rights. Unless the advocate has established a sound trust relationship with the client, however, the advocate may be receiving biased information from the client. When the advocate works with collateral resources, this bias can prove to be at least embarrassing and perhaps even a major cause of failure. The story of Mrs. K. is a case in point. She told the writer that the Department of Social Development had refused any help to her. When the writer went to the Department caseworker, she was shown correspondence to prove that Mrs. K. had been offered help on many occasions. The B. family offers another example. They told the writer that they had never applied for welfare from the City Social Service Department when in fact they had, and this biased information meant that it was difficult to fight for assistance for them again. It is clear that without accurate information, the chances of intelligently handling a case can be limited.

While biased information can prove embarrassing to the advocate, lack of information from both the individual and the agency can be even more serious. The writer has

referred to the difficulty in obtaining information about the membership of various jurisdictional committees. For example, all decisions on the part of social workers in the Department of Social Development are governed by that department's policy handbook, which is difficult to obtain. Other public bodies such as the United Community Fund, and the Commission Board of the City of Edmonton make some of their policies public, but the rest are so cloaked in legalistic terminology that they are almost impossible for a layman to understand. Policy statements and legislation produced by departments at all levels of government rarely offer information as to how such policies and legislation are to be interpreted and implemented.

As well, it is frequently difficult to discover what public bodies and government departments are responsible for particular problem areas. Without such information, the client group and the advocate are often severely handicapped in their efforts to obtain services and assistance. This confusing wilderness adds to the feelings of powerlessness experienced by the poor.

The Technical Competence and Training of Social Workers

The question of technical competence can compound the problem areas mentioned previously. Indignation and good intentions are not enough for the fulfillment of the advocacy role. Knowledge of and competency in the use of

the appropriate machinery for redressing grievances is of utmost importance. As well, the advocate must have knowledge and skill in reaching and using influence and power systems in the community, knowledge of law and civil rights legislation, knowledge of social services delivery systems, and knowledge of change strategies. Some practical experience in first aid, nutrition, homemaking and economics can also be useful.

At the present time, social workers are not being provided with these skills during their training period. Current social work education and practice has been psychiatrically-based and largely influenced by the mental hygiene movement of the 1930's and 1940's. The traditional techniques of societal change have tended to become peripheral to the practice of social workers, as they have become more sophisticated in the dynamics of interpersonal and intrapersonal relationships. This means for instance, that the assessment of pathology in a family may cloud the societal or community issue. A low-income person may appear and be diagnosed as, depressed and withdrawn. He may in fact be hungry, or he may be hostile and defensive against any further intrusions into his privacy or further attacks on his already poor concepts of self.

Social workers have typically offered the "adjustment" solution to societal problems. They have helped clients in developing strength to cope with situations

rather than in developing skills aimed at changing the situation and getting at causes outside the self. At the intervention level, social workers rarely share their skills with clients, and rarely make a genuine contribution to a client's ability to handle the next crisis on his own.

Mrs. R. is a case in point. She first came to the agency seeking support in her decision to leave her husband. Rather than wishing marriage counselling, Mrs. R. wanted help in finding a new home, applying for social assistance, and removing herself and her children physically from the home situation that was so debilitating. Her decision had been made, and in her terms she had identified her most pressing problems. Marriage counselling was not the solution.

Time is another area of concern for social workers practising advocacy. As the day-to-day crises are dealt with, there is a danger that the workers, in partnership with clients, may lose sight of the long-range goals of changes in social policy.

Finally, the effectiveness of advocacy is dependent on the status and credibility of the advocate, and of the agency employing the advocate. Not only must sound trust relationships with the client group and with other agencies be developed, but the advocate must as well, demonstrate some competence to all involved.

The secret of success is not perpetual militance but earning and keeping the support of one's primary constituency . . . good advocacy will help people to move with maximum effectiveness and minimum loss of freedom of action, option, or ally.⁷

Problems Associated with Low-income Families

One of the potentially undesirable tendencies on the part of people employed in the serving professions is to ignore the poor. Beginning in the 1930's, private agencies were replaced by public agencies in working with the poor. The social work profession at that time was concerned with status, the problems of communication, and the opportunities for professionalization as well as the needs of individuals. The mental hygiene movement, psychiatrically based, worked better with middle class clientele.

The public agencies continued the service to poor persons--largely reflecting the desires and attitudes of the general public . . . The greatest indictment of the public welfare personnel is the fact that they continued to serve at the behest of the general community, fighting a battle without adequate manpower, adequate tools and a clear statement of objectives. The general community wanted the poor to be invisible in America--and they became invisible to a far greater extent than anyone ever imagined . . . In fact, the poor became invisible from the social workers and even the public and private agencies established to help them. It was a vicious cycle. Hard to reach persons and families were expected to be assisted by hard to reach agencies and workers.⁸

The new developments in social work, such as an increasing emphasis on advocacy, are a distinct attempt to change

this bias in psychiatrically oriented counselling. While a middle class clientele was much more amenable to this type of therapy, it is seen as being of little use in working with the poor. Actual physical impoverishment alone is not nearly so debilitating as the poverty associated with a sense of unrelieved personal impotence. Such impotence is not readily cured by therapeutic means. In contradiction to the general belief that the poor are inarticulate, unmotivated, and cannot be organized, it is becoming more and more evident that this is not so. The poor lack information, they lack techniques for change, but they are not ignorant, and given some support and some educational assistance, they are able to act on their own behalf, and may be the best solvers of their problems of political impotence. Mrs. S., in the preparation for and the presentation of her position to the Senate Committee on Poverty hearings, offers an example of this. As well, organized groups of low-income people, such as the Humans on Welfare Society, are making themselves felt and heard in many spheres.

While all of this may be true for the broad grouping of low-income families, the writer would like to suggest one exception where advocacy may be of little use, and that is in working with certain kinds of mentally ill patients. From the case histories offered earlier, it should be clear that persons like Mrs. K. and Mrs. P.

because of their mental illness are able to take little or no action on their own behalf.

In summary, there are problems inherent in the use of advocacy. Controversies between client groups and funding organizations may develop to the point where funding and support for advocacy projects is difficult to obtain. Another difficult area is found in establishing a balance between direct intervention or the mobilization of the client group which is helpful and useful. Bias and a lack of necessary information to work with offers a third problem. As well, the technical competence and specialized training of social workers may be a barrier to social workers wishing to practice advocacy. Finally, because the poor have been largely invisible in the past, and because their problems are not always solvable by counselling, it has been assumed by many that the poor are ignorant and incapable. This generalized belief offers a fifth problem in employing advocacy as it may set up psychological barriers to advocacy attempts and the utilization of community resources.

The Advantages of the Advocacy Approach

Improvement in the Quality of Life

Like most techniques used in human resources development by those in the serving professions, family advocacy has as its philosophical goal, the improvement

in the quality of life for all citizens. Through the two broad thrusts of intervention and social policy-making the necessary steps are taken towards this goal. More importantly, however, the families themselves are involved in making these changes. Arnstein says of the advocate:

These technicians are hired by a community group to work on a three-pronged approach to community development. Simultaneously they help the group (1) to become increasingly more representative and accountable to the neighbourhood, (2) to conceptualize what programmatic approaches will benefit the community and to define which trade-offs can be supported at the negotiating stage, and (3) to design the political strategies needed to achieve the group's priorities.⁹

In this way the group develops the capability to design political and socio-economic plans that attack the status quo instead of palliative approaches and cooptation which tend to be substitutes for more effective action.

Increased citizen participation, increased chances for success in achieving desired goals, increased democratization may lead, as well, to a decrease in alienation. This can only result in an improvement in the self-concepts of the poor. Simultaneously, the advocacy process serves to increase the number of options and alternatives available to the client group.

Mrs. Y., through her experiences with other mothers on welfare and with working on the low-income cookbook gained the necessary confidence to approach the school principal. The B. family is now better established financially and because of this Mr. B. was able to return

to school. Their future prospects appear to be positive ones. Through the experiences of Miss. C. with the Crisis Unit, that situation is being changed.

All of these occurrences, interrelated as they are, can only lead to an improvement in the quality of life, not just for low-income families, but for society as a whole.

Increased Inter-agency Contact

The intervention aspect of family advocacy forces increased inter-agency contact through the mobilization of all possible resources. For example, in the course of the four-month advocacy project many contacts were made with the following organizations: The Alberta Department of Social Development, The Welfare Information Services, Legal Aid, Debtors' Assistance Board, The Edmonton Public Library, The Parks and Recreation Commission, The City Social Services Department, The Local Board of Health, The Department of Health, The Federation of Community Leagues, The Downtown Churches Corporation, The Young Mens' and Young Womens' Christian Association, The Social Services Departments of Sherwood Park and St. Albert, The Canadian Mental Health Association, Catholic Charities, The University of Alberta Extension Department, The Edmonton Citizens' for Better Housing, The Edmonton Housing Authority, The City Engineers Department, The Public Trustee, The Attorney General's Department, The Public and Separate

School Boards, The Human Resources Development Authority, The Salvation Army, The Humans on Welfare Society, Help Edmonton's Little People Society, The F.U.T.U.R.E. Society, The Yough Involvement Program and The Edmonton Social Planning Council.

Such contact between agencies is beneficial in several ways. First, it provides a wide field of education whereby the advocate becomes aware of the resources available, and the other resources obtain some conception of the practice of advocacy. Secondly, increased contacts and increased knowledge of resources mean that a more effective job is likely to be done for client families. Finally, advocacy, in making demands on services offered by a variety of agencies, may force improvement in the quality of social services.

Decreased Family Stress

Typically, low-income families seeking the services of an agency such as the Family Service Association of Edmonton are suffering from not only the exigencies of financial stress, but also a host of other problems. These are large debt loads, poor living conditions, inadequate medical and dental care, or marriage and personality problems. They are often, in the most total sense of the word, multi-problem families, with few coping skills.

The intervention aspect of family advocacy serves to decrease or eliminate some of these stressful situations,

so that the families have a better chance at solving some of the more pressing and important issues. For instance, in the case of the B. family, the most pressing issue was Mr. B.'s unemployment. Associated with that however, was the condition of their basement suite, the lack of money for food, and a number of small problems that prevented Mr. B. from seeking employment. To help them solve the smaller issues such as housing and food for a few weeks, meant that Mr. B. could seek employment without the strain of worrying about the home situation. Often just that amount of help can make a great difference in the level of helpfulness in a family, and in their ability to cope with problems.

The P. family offers another example. Mr. P. was able to become involved in his wife's therapy only when the problems of immediate financial and homemaker assistance were dealt with. When that strain was removed, Mr. P. was able to talk with his wife rather than make continual demands upon her, was able to spend time with the children explaining the situation, and finally, he had time to reflect on his own needs and how they might be met.

While these kinds of interventions are not dramatic, they do serve to allow families opportunities to come to grips with basic issues affecting them, and to perhaps gain just enough confidence and peace of mind to feel that the task ahead is not insurmountable. With a group of people,

interventions of small amounts of seed money, for example, can make a great deal of difference. Small successes can be very encouraging, and can assist in decreasing stress.

Increased Citizen Education

Intervention that has actually involved the client group at all stages of the process, means that the citizen group learns how to carry out such processes on their own. This can be beneficial in several directions. Firstly, the client group is learning how to participate more actively in society, and is becoming aware of services available in the community. Secondly, the personnel offering the services can be made more aware of the special needs they must fulfill. Thirdly, the psychological and emotional encouragement derived by the client group through the process of carrying out their own interventions is immeasurably satisfying for them. Finally, and most importantly, such a process of client involvement in intervention leads to dependency reduction which can only be profitable for the society at large. The effects of advocacy in the area of increased citizen education are illustrated in all the case histories offered.

There are two spin-off effects that are peripheral to citizen education but important. Firstly, a client group working with an advocate may get faster action due initially to the credibility of the advocate, but eventually due to the quality of the requests made by the client group.

And secondly, an increased demand for services may lead to a higher quality of service if the client group is not satisfied with the present level. The most obvious illustration is the effect Miss C.'s case has on improving the availability and quality of the twenty-four hour per day crisis telephone service now being established.

Increased Awareness of
Inadequacies in the
Delivery System

The advocate, through keeping and analyzing careful field notes can begin to note the inadequacies in the social services delivery system, trace the patterns, and begin to point out some needed changes, perhaps through using the clients who have experienced the inadequacies. Two examples are noteworthy.

Miss C. and her landlady were not the only persons affected by the Department of Social Development's Crisis Unit. There were, during the course of the Advocacy Project, several instances where the Crisis Unit would not respond in the areas they were meant to deal with--child protection and emergency shelter for social assistance families. By keeping careful documentation of these examples, and by encouraging interested persons in the community to become involved, this situation is on the verge of being changed. An organization in the city, using the documented material obtained during the project, is now negotiating for a twenty-four hour per day telephone

information and intervention line that will use volunteers both in intervention and follow-up.

Many of the clients who were involved in the Advocacy Project had debt repayments to the Debtor's Assistance Board of \$50. to \$90. per month. Because the Department of Social Development would not recognize that their monthly income was less the amount they were required to pay to the courts, many of these families could not qualify for income supplements. This policy put many families in severe financial distress. Negotiations are now being carried out between the Department of Social Development and the Debtor's Assistance Board to change this policy.

Because advocacy stresses citizen participation as a means of bettering the self-concepts of low-income families, and as a means of increasing the number of options available to the poor, advocacy leads to an improvement in the quality of life in our society. As well, increased inter-agency contact, decreased family stress, increased citizen education, and increased awareness of inadequacies in the social services delivery system form the advantageous effects of the use of advocacy techniques in working with low-income families.

Summary

It is the writer's opinion, formed both through field work experience and through research, that advocacy

is a sound community development technique in working with disadvantaged people, particularly the low-income sector of the population. The use of interventions can free these persons to begin to take action on the larger issues affecting the quality of their lives, and can involve them in policy-making in areas that are of particular concern to them. While there are problems associated with the use of the advocacy technique, the advantages both to the individual citizen and to the larger society far outweigh the disadvantages.

FOOTNOTES

¹F. J. Bregha, "Community Development in Canada, Problems and Strategies," Community Development Journal, V (January, 1970), 2.

²Ibid., p. 5.

³J. K. Galbraith, The Affluent Society (New York: The American Library of World Literature Inc., 1958), p. 16.

⁴F. F. Piven, "Whom Does the Advocate Planner Serve?" Social Policy (May-June, 1970), 34.

⁵P. Marris and M. Rein, Dilemmas of Social Reform (New York: Atherton Press, 1967), p. 45.

⁶F. F. Piven, op. cit., p. 35.

⁷Ibid., p. 36.

⁸D. Thursz, "Social Aspects of Poverty" (Ottawa: Special Planning Secretariat, Privy Council Office, 1966), p. 2. (Mimeographed.)

⁹S. R. Arnstein, "But Which Advocate Planner?" Social Policy (July-August, 1970), 33.

CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Summary

One in every five Canadian families was judged by the Dominion Bureau of Statistics in 1961 to fall below the poverty line, exhibiting feelings of powerlessness and alienation, and other problems associated with financial stress. It was suggested that family advocacy, with its two thrusts of intervention and social policy-making could serve to alleviate some of the immediate crises associated with low income, and could work with families to change social policies that affected them. In practice, advocacy could be used early in the community development process as a means of gaining an entree by the advocate or community development worker into the community.

In the present thesis, the concept of advocacy was isolated in order to describe and analyze it. Family advocacy was seen as an extension of traditional casework which moved beyond offering coping skills, into the area of sharing with the client population, through their involvement, techniques of change. The historical roots of such advocacy techniques lie in the early Citizen's

Advice Bureaus of Great Britain, the Ombudsman legislation, the more recent third-party intervention strategies of the American Community Action Programs, and brokerage theories in political science.

A description of the two thrusts of advocacy was presented in this thesis, through an examination of the techniques of advocacy: studies and surveys, expert testimony, case conferences with other agencies, inter-agency committees, educational methods, position taking, administrative redress, demonstration projects, direct contacts with officials and legislators, the formation of coalition groups, the development of client groups, petitions, persistent demands, and finally demonstrations and protests.

In discussing the low-income families (as case histories) poverty was viewed as an insufficient access to certain goods, services and conditions of life which are available to a majority of the Canadian population and are accepted as basic to a decent minimum standard of living. As such, it was seen as a relative concept. Statistics derived from the 1961 Census and from the study currently being carried out by the Senate Committee on Poverty were used to describe poverty as an objective and measurable phenomenon. However, poverty was primarily dealt with at the subjective, personal level, because it is at this level that advocacy is practised. The feelings of futurelessness, the life style of deprivation, the

increased dependency on helping agencies, the low level of mental health associated with increased psychological and financial stress, and the value orientations of the poor were examined. It was seen that the financial and psychological stress experienced by low-income families led to apathy and alienation from the larger society, and it was suggested that advocacy offered techniques that responded to that situation.

In discussing advocacy in the context of community development, several definitions of community development were offered, and it was concluded that community development was both the process of social animation and the development of human resources programs. It included education, motivation and client involvement. The community development worker's role meant communicating with all sectors of the community, organizing the client population, creating individual and group learning situations, motivating, encouraging leadership and followership, and finally, phasing out of direct involvement. These were seen as commonalities that exist between community development and advocacy. As well, the goals and purposes were viewed as being similar. Two differences were noted at the level of entree into the community.

The early stages of community development were seen as including a systematic discussion of common felt needs leading to systematic planning for programs that

might achieve these goals. Family advocacy was viewed as being helpful in this initial process. The intervention aspects of advocacy would provide an entree into the client group and the social policy-making thrust would help in carrying out plans devised by the client group and the advocate together.

In evaluating family advocacy as a community development technique in working with low-income families, problems inherent in the approach, as well as the advantages gained from using it, were emphasized. The problems were seen in the areas of funding and support, the question of direct intervention leading possibly to client dependency versus client mobilization resulting in helplessness on the part of the client, bias and lack of information, the technical competence and training of social workers, and in the special concerns presented by low-income families. On the other hand, advantages were seen in the areas of an improvement in the quality of life, increased inter-agency contact, decreased family stress, increased citizen education, and increased awareness of inadequacies in the social services delivery system. It also must be noted that despite successful interventions both at the family and societal levels, the multi-problem nature of many families adds to the agency's limitations and societal strain in resolving the difficulties presented by low-income families.

Conclusions

It is concluded, both through the field work experience, and through academic study, that advocacy is a sound community development technique for working with the disadvantaged, particularly the low-income sector of the population. The use of interventions by the advocate serves to free these people to take action on the larger issues affecting the quality of their lives, and can involve them in policy-making in areas that are of particular concern to them. While there are problems associated with the use of the advocacy technique, the advantages both to the individual citizen and to the larger society far outweigh the disadvantages.

These conclusions concern society at large. For the Family Service Association of Edmonton, other conclusions are drawn that result from their decision to extend their casework services to include advocacy. It is concluded that the development of the Family Advocacy Project meant the following changes for the agency and its direct service to clients.

First, the agency staff wished to increase its services to the low-income sector of the population, and established the Advocacy Project to achieve this end. Second, by adopting such an advocacy thrust, the agency supported the concept of helping clients move beyond just coping with their problems into the area of changing the

situations they found themselves in. That is, the agency supported the idea of action beyond the individual case of either personal difficulty or social injustice into broader social action. Third, because the process involved in family advocacy is different from that of casework, the Family Service Association of Edmonton accepted and encouraged a new approach that was different from their traditional style. Fourth, the agency hired the writer on the basis of her community development skills rather than on the usual basis of graduate work in social work and counselling methods. Fifth, by encouraging this project, the agency also accepted the idea of the possibility of action taken on behalf of clients, that was more radical than had been the case historically. Sixth, it must be concluded that the Family Service Association of Edmonton was prepared to accept a decrease in its income by establishing the Advocacy Project. The agency charges a fee to its clients, based on their income and family size. Because the project meant an influx of more low-income families who were either charged a minimal fee or no fee at all, the agency would see a decrease in its income, but an increase in the amount of service rendered. Seventh, the comments made to the writer privately by resource personnel outside the agency suggested that the Family Service Association of Edmonton, had had prior to the Advocacy Project a largely middle and high income client group.

It must be concluded that this perception of the agency changed over the duration of the project as the writer moved out into the community. Finally, it is the writer's belief, based on agency staff comments during and after the project, that the agency's service to low-income clients was improved by the adoption of the process of advocacy. Clients had their immediate crises met and were involved in the meeting of those needs. Such involvement led to increased self-sufficiency and a better self-concept for most of the clients who participated in the Advocacy Project.

For the writer, participation in the Advocacy Project meant foremost, personal growth and development. Much knowledge was gained about available community resources in Edmonton, about family and housing legislation, about the proper methods of addressing grievances, and further about the helpful ways of working with low-income families. The writer was also allowed the opportunity to test learnings gained in an academic situation in the practical situation. Most importantly, however, the writer was able to develop empathy with low-income families, to experience their plight but also learned to act on that empathy in ways which were useful and helpful to the families. Therefore, for the writer the experience was highly beneficial.

Implications for Future Research

A number of questions regarding advocacy as a community development technique in working with low-income

families still remain. These questions offer possibilities for future exploration on the part of practitioners and researchers.

One of the more pressing concerns, in the writer's opinion, is the question of the effectiveness of the process of advocacy over an extended period of time. While advocacy was shown to be effective with twenty-five families over a four-month period, one may question its long-term effectiveness in getting to the roots of societal problems, and in affecting those roots. That is, how effective is advocacy at moving beyond crisis intervention and organizational policy change into the broader area of societal change? Can the position of the disadvantaged as a population be changed? Is there a way of measuring the amount of positive improvement in the self-concepts of the poor when they become involved in decision-making? As well, this thesis has demonstrated the use of advocacy in an urban setting. Could it be functional and effective in a rural situation where the community resources are not so readily available?

In the field of education, other questions arise. What kinds of learning environments, other than the formal ones such as schools and extension courses, can be established in communities whereby the citizenry can learn effectively, and learn what they want to learn? In the advocate's relationship with an individual or family how

are skills most usefully shared?

For researchers and practitioners interested in agency relations, at least three questions are relevant. First, what is the response of professional workers to client advisory groups? Second, what areas of conflict are likely to arise when advocacy and traditional counselling are practised in the same agency, and how might these conflicts be resolved? Third, in the area of agency funding and support, what steps might be taken to resolve the anxiety felt by funding bodies when radical action, on the part of a funded agency, is either contemplated or taken?

Finally, while literature on advocacy is developing in abundance, it is often difficult to locate. That is, a good deal of the literature is mimeographed and located in private and government agencies, and not widely distributed. A possible solution might be a data-gathering system, or the development of an extensive annotated bibliography of current findings, reports and research.

While these questions do not exhaust the possibilities for future research, they are areas of fruitful study. They are questions that arose during the writing of this thesis.

Advocacy entails risks for the advocate and the employing agency. However, the increasing alienation and powerlessness felt by low-income families in Canada must be responded to quickly and effectively. Advocacy offers such a response.

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APPENDIX

PROFILE SHEET ON LOW INCOME FAMILIES*

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

Marital Status and Ages of Heads of Household _____

_____Children _____

_____Monthly Income:
Gross _____ Net (Take Home) _____

Source of Income _____

Initial reason for coming to F.S.A.E. _____

_____Was this initial concern dealt with _____

_____What other needs are you experiencing _____

_____Were they met by F.S.A.E. worker or by a referral to
another source if not met _____

*This sheet was utilized by D. Bateman in interviews conducted at the Family Service Association of Edmonton, Summer, 1970.

1.0 Education:

1.1 Level of Education: Husband _____

Wife _____

1.2 Is level of education an employment factor _____

1.3 Upgrading or retraining:

1.31 Upgrading accessible _____

1.32 Upgrading non-accessible (reason) _____

1.33 Low motivation _____

2.0 Spending of income/month:

2.1 Housing _____ 2.6 Entertainment _____

2.2 Food _____ 2.7 Utilities _____

2.3 Clothing _____ 2.8 Fees _____

2.4 Medical and dental _____ 2.9 Debt repayment _____

2.5 Transportation _____ 2.10 Other _____

3.0 Participation in community resources (other than welfare agencies and school)

3.1 Level of awareness of C.R. _____

3.2 Access to C.R.

3.21 Physical access _____

3.22 Financial access _____

3.3 Use of C.R. (Specify what resources and the number of hours per month) _____

3.4 C.R. not available (reason) _____

3.5 C.R. not responsive (reason) _____

3.6 Individual not interested in seeking out C.R. _____

4.0 Relationship with school system

4.1 Feels school treatment of low income children is adequate or more than adequate _____

4.2 Feels that treatment of low income children is prejudicial _____

4.3 Has approached the school _____

5.0 Facilities for children

5.1 Recreational:

5.11 Knowledge of _____

5.12 Use of _____

5.13 Not available (reason) _____

5.2 Education (other than school)

5.21 Knowledge of _____

5.22 Use of _____

5.23 Not available (reason) _____

5.3 Day and evening facilities:

5.31 Knowledge of _____

5.32 Use of _____

5.33 Not available (reason) _____

6.0 Problems of having low income

6.1 As perceived by the individual _____

6.2 As perceived by the Advocate _____

7.0 Relationship with financial assistance welfare agency

7.1 Knowledge of welfare rights

7.11 Perceived by individual _____
_____7.12 Perceived by Advocate _____
_____7.13 Response to knowledge of rights _____
_____7.2 Access to worker (Number of Contacts per month)
_____7.3 Relationship as perceived by recipient _____
_____7.4 Specific Comments re service _____

8.0 Self perception of the future:

- 8.1 Expects to be on welfare or low income for next year _____
- 8.2 Expects to be in similar situation for next five years or more _____
- 8.3 Feels situation can be changed _____
- 8.4 Feels situation cannot be changed _____
- 8.5 Wants to participate in changing it
- 8.51 Actively _____
- 8.52 Passively _____

9.0 Action taken by Advocate:

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